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ISRO to launch Chandrayaan-4 in 2028

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India buys €2.5B worth of Russian oil in October

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SPORTS

SA seal first Test win on Indian soil after 15 years

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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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MP CM joins Hindu unity padyatra in Mathura

MATHURA, 16 NOV

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday joined the 'Sanatan Ekta Padyatra', a march for Hindu unity led by spiritual leader Dhirendra Shastri. During his hour-long visit, Yadav was seen sitting on the road and sharing a meal with Shastri, the head priest of Bageshwar Dham, as the padyatra moved through Mathura before concluding at the Banke Bihari Temple in Vrindavan. The march began on 7 November in Delhi and travelled through Haryana before reaching Mathura and Vrindavan, aiming to promote unity among followers of Sanatan Dharma. Earlier, several politicians and celebrities, including Manohar Lal Khattar and Shikhar Dhawan, had also joined the yatra.
—PTI

Amit Shah to chair key meet in Faridabad

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will chair the 32nd Northern Zonal Council meeting in Faridabad on Monday, with discussions focusing on education, health, electricity, and the speedy investigation of sexual offences against women and children. The council, comprising eight northern states and Union territories, will also review Fast Track Special Courts, ERSS-112, and village banking access. Formed under the 1956 States Reorganisation Act, the council promotes Centre-state cooperation and has held 63 meetings in the past 11 years.
—PTI

'NDA used World Bank funds for Bihar polls'

JSP says ₹14K cr used in schemes to woo women

PATNA, 16 NOV

Reeling from its poor showing in the Bihar Assembly elections, the Prashant Kishor-led Jan Suraaj Party has alleged that the NDA government diverted funds from the World Bank to influence voters.

In an ANI interview, party spokesperson Pavan Verma claimed Rs 10,000 was transferred to 1.25 crore women voters under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana using part of Rs 21,000 crore earmarked for another project. "An hour before the poll code came into effect, Rs 14,000 crore were distributed," he alleged, adding the claim may or may not be true.

When asked if such welfare schemes were the X factor, Verma noted that Prime Minister Modi had criticised freebies in the past, referring to Delhi polls, and questioned why similar measures were used in Bihar. He also dismissed claims that Jan Suraaj's poor performance was linked to founder Prashant Kishore's promise to lift the liquor ban, pointing out liquor was widely available at higher prices, affecting women managing households.

Verma said public debt in Bihar stands at Rs 4,06,000 crore, with daily interest of Rs 63 crore, and suggested the treasury is nearly empty. He alleged that remaining payments to 2.5 crore women were contingent on NDA victory. Uday Singh, national president of Jan Suraaj, accused the ruling alliance of spending nearly Rs 40,000 crore from June to polling day to "buy votes", including World Bank funds. The NDA swept the polls with 202 seats, with BJP winning 89, JD(U) 85, and allies performing strongly. *—Agencies*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 5

Party spokesperson Pavan Verma and founder Prashant Kishor ***PHOTO: PTI***

NDA FINALISES CABINET SHARING FORMULA

PATNA, 16 NOV

Bihar's new NDA government is moving swiftly towards formation, with the BJP and JD(U) agreeing on a cabinet-sharing formula. Sources said the parties have settled on one ministerial berth for every six MLAs, providing a framework for allocating portfolios among alliance partners.

JD(U) national executive president Sanjay Kumar Jha, after consultations with BJP central leaders in Delhi, is returning to Patna to meet Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and finalise preparations for upcoming legislature party meetings.

Simultaneously, BJP is engaging with smaller allies to confirm their cabinet share. HAM patron Jitan Ram Manjhi, Upendra Kushwaha, and RLJP chief Chirag Paswan are travelling to Delhi to meet senior BJP leaders, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The EC is submitting poll results to Governor Rajendra Arlekar, after which the new Assembly will be notified. Nitish Kumar has called a cabinet meeting on Monday to approve dissolution of the outgoing Assembly and tender his resignation. Preparations are underway for the NDA swearing-in, likely on 19 or 20 November, with senior BJP chief ministers expected to attend. *—Agencies*

NIA arrests Delhi suicide bomber's accomplice

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested Amir Rashid Ali, a Kashmir resident who allegedly conspired with "suicide bomber" Dr Umar Un Nabi in the 10 November car bomb blast near Delhi's Red Fort that killed 13 people.

Ali, a native of Samboora in Pampore, was held in Delhi. The NIA said the car used in the explosion was registered in his name, and that he travelled to the capital to help facilitate its purchase. This is the first time the agency has officially termed Umar a "suicide bomber" and described the explosive-laden vehicle as a "vehicle-borne IED".

Forensic analysis has confirmed that the deceased driver was Umar Un Nabi, an assistant professor of general medicine at Al Falah University in Faridabad and a resident of Pulwama. The NIA has also seized another vehicle belonging to him for examination. Investigators have so far questioned 73 witnesses, including injured survivors.In a parallel development in south Kashmir, Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK) conducted a late-night search at a doctor's residence in Anantnag as part of its probe into an alleged "white-collar terror module". Officers found a woman doctor from Haryana staying as a tenant and seized a phone. *—PTI*

Dr Umar Un Nabi and Amir Rashid Ali ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

SKYLINE SCRUB SQUAD

High above the ground, workers hang from ropes as they scrub the glass façade of a high-rise on Bengaluru's International Airport Road ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Army mulls induction of women into Territorial Army battalions

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

The Army is considering inducting women cadres into Territorial Army (TA) battalions under a pilot project, with recruitment initially limited to a few units, sources said on Sunday. The initiative aims to gradually expand opportunities for women in the force.

The TA, in its current form, was established under the Territorial Army Act on 18 August 1948 and formally inaugurated by Governor General C Rajagopalachari on 9 October, 1949. Conceived as a 'citizen soldiers' force, it supplements organisational requirements and offers able-bodied volunteers — particularly those overage for regular Army enrolment, an opportunity to serve in uniform.

According to sources, the induction of women will begin in select battalions and may be extended based on initial feedback. The government has repeatedly emphasised the role of Nari Shakti in the armed forces.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha in March 2022, then Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt said the combat employment of women is a "continuously evolving process" reviewed regularly by the services. Women officers currently serve in 10 arms and services of the Indian Army, including the Corps of Engineers, Corps of Signals, Army Air Defence, Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps, Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, Army Aviation Corps, Intelligence Corps, Judge Advocate General Branch and Army Education Corps, besides the Armed Forces Medical Services. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

3 daughters leave Lalu's Patna home

PATNA, 16 NOV

The crisis within the Lalu Prasad Yadav household deepened on Sunday, a day after Singapore-based daughter Rohini Acharya publicly severed ties with her family. Following her explosive outburst, three more daughters – Rajlakshmi, Ragini, and Chanda – departed the family's Patna residence with their children, travelling to Delhi, signalling a widening schism in Bihar's most prominent political family.

Rohini, a doctor by profession, had quit politics and accused family members and close aides of abusive behaviour, including an alleged attempt to hit her with a slipper. Her revelations came in the wake of the RJD's electoral humiliation, where the party's tally plunged from 75 to around 25 seats.

Sources said Rajlakshmi, Ragini, and Chanda were distressed by the recent turmoil, leaving only Lalu, Rabri Devi, and Misa Bharti at 10 Circular Road. Tejashwi Yadav, whose leadership has been criticised post-election, has largely stayed out of public view.

Meanwhile, estranged brother Tej Pratap Yadav, expelled from the party earlier this year, reacted strongly to Rohini's allegations. Through the Janshakti Janata Dal, he condemned the humiliation and appealed to Lalu, warning of "harsh consequences" and framing the conflict as a matter of "daughter's dignity and Bihar's self-respect."

In a conciliatory move, Tej Pratap extended support to Rohini and proposed making her national patron of the party. Party sources said he plans to meet her personally to formalise the offer, signalling a potential political realignment within the Yadav family amid ongoing tensions. *—Agencies*

>>>More on Page 3

Following Rohini's outburst, Rajlakshmi, Ragini and Chanda left the family's residence with their children and moved to Delhi ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

AFTER MAYOR'S DEATH

100s injured as Gen Z protest grips Mexico

MEXICO CITY, 16 NOV

Several thousand people took to the streets of Mexico City on Saturday to protest crime, corruption and impunity in a demonstration organised by members of Generation Z, which ended with strong backing from older supporters of opposition parties.

The demonstration was mostly peaceful but ended with some young people clashing with the police. Protesters attacked police with stones, fireworks, sticks and chains, grabbing police shields and other equipment.

The capital's security secretary, Pablo Vázquez. said 120 people were injured, 100 of them police officers. Twenty people were arrested.

The protests erupted over the spate of high profile murders and rising crime in the nation. Most notably, the popular Michoacan Mayor Carlos Manzo was shot on the Mexican Day of the Dead.

Notably, unlike the wave of other Gen Z protests against governments – the largest being in Nepal - President Claudia Sheinbaum still has high approval ratings. Several other protests had ousted the ruling governments. *—Agencies*

>>>More on Page 6

- The demonstration was mostly peaceful but ended with some young people clashing with the police. Protesters attacked police with stones, fireworks, sticks and chains, grabbing police shields and other equipment.

Protesters charge towards police during a youth anti-government march in Mexico City on Saturday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Kerala BLO dies by suicide, cites SIR related job stress

KANNUR, 16 NOV

A Booth Level Officer (BLO), Aneesh George, was found hanged at his home in Kannur, with family alleging that mounting work pressure related to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls drove him to take his own life. George, a government school peon, was reportedly working late into the night to fulfil his BLO duties when the incident occurred. A friend close to the family stated, "He complained about the heavy workload and stress he faced to complete the SIR-related forms."

Political leaders, including CPI(M)'s MV Jayarajan and Congress's Rijil Makkutty, echoed concerns over the pressures faced by BLOs. Jayarajan called George's death "extremely unfortunate" and urged the Election Commission to suspend SIR implementation until after the local elections, asserting that excessive workload had played a critical role.

In a separate incident, a Mahila Morcha activist in Thiruvananthapuram attempted suicide, fearing the denial of an election ticket for the local body polls.The incident came soon after RSS activist Anand K Thampi, 39 committed suicide on Saturday. *—PTI*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

PROTECT EVERY CHILD

Former Lokayukta Justice N Santosh Hegde joins BOSCO students during an awareness walk on child rights protection in Bengaluru on Sunday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

KSPCB to mark golden jubilee from 18–19 Nov

BENGALURU, 16 NOV

The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) will mark its Golden Jubilee with a two-day event in Bengaluru on 18–19 November, featuring seminars and state-level awards for environmental contributions. Five achievers will receive the Indira Priyadarshini Environment Award, KSPCB Chairman P M Narendra Swamy said. A seminar on circular economy and sustainability will be held on the first day, covering wastewater reuse, solid and plastic waste management, e-waste, construction waste, battery waste and extended producer responsibility. Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar will inaugurate the event. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will open the valedictory ceremony on November 19 at Palace Grounds. District-level Indira Priyadarshini awards have also been given across Karnataka. Awareness programmes were also held in all Assembly constituencies, including student competitions and felicitation of pourakarmikas. A statewide reel competition on environmental awareness also carries prizes of Rs 50,000, Rs 25,000 and Rs 10,000. ***—Salar News***

PHOTO: SALAR

Kalaripayattu State games kicks off in Koramangala

BENGALURU, 16 NOV

The Kalaripayattu Council of Karnataka inaugurated the Kalaripayattu State Championship Karnataka 2025-26 for Sub Junior, Junior, Senior, and Super Senior categories at Koramangala Indoor Stadium. The ceremony was attended by SE Sudheendra, Chairman of the Karnataka State Bioenergy Development Board, and Vaishnavi Kuppuswamy KAS, Special Officer to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Sudheendra highlighted the Chief Minister's commitment to sports in Karnataka, particularly Kalaripayattu, and announced cash prizes of Rs 5 lakh, 3 lakh, and 2 lakh for the first, second, and third winners, respectively. Dr. Vaishnavi Kuppuswamy, herself a gold medalist and former state champion in the Super Seniors category, spoke about plans to introduce Kalaripayattu at school level to generate interest among students. She said the championship would provide a platform to showcase skills, discipline, and competitive spirit among young sports enthusiasts. ***—Salar News***

Chittapur turns into fortress as RSS conducts march

Court-cleared procession held with 1,200 cops on duty

CHITTAPUR, 16 NOV

The procession marks the Sangh's centenary and comes after an earlier request for 18 November was rejected following objections by Minister Priyank Kharge to the use of government property ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Heavy security blanketed Chittapur on Sunday as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) held its route march between 3pm and 5.30pm, following conditional permission from Karnataka High Court.

Over 1,200 police personnel from Kalaburagi, Yadgir and Bidar were deployed to prevent any untoward incidents. The Town Municipal Council (TMC) installed 56 CCTV cameras along the march route, supplemented by 10 drones. The organisers were permitted to display 200 saffron flags and buntings from Saturday morning until Sunday evening.

As per court and administrative conditions, only 300 ganaveshadharis and a 50-member band were allowed. The procession began at Bajaj Kalyan Mantapa, passed Basaveshwara Circle, Bus Station Circle, Ambedkar Circle, Raghavendra Khanavali, Canara Bank and TAP Office Circle, before returning to the starting point. Police cordoned off the venue, while bomb squads and sniffer dogs conducted checks.

The march marks the Sangh's centenary and comes after an earlier request for 18 October was rejected following objections raised by district MLA and Minister **Priyank Kharge** to the use of government property. Permission was granted only

after multiple rounds of talks and a High Court directive.

Priyank alleges misuse of development funds

Addressing reporters in Kalaburagi, Minister Priyank Kharge levelled a serious allegation that the RSS had siphoned off funds from the Kalyana Karnataka Region Development Board (KKRDB) during the previous BJP government. He said he would soon release documents to substantiate the claim.

"The RSS is not a registered organisation. Once it is registered, it will come under the tax regime. They call it 'Gurudakshina', but the accounts of those who donate to an unregistered association are never audited," he alleged.

Kharge maintained that the route march was conducted strictly as per court guidelines. "We decided the number of participants, the route, and who could join. They claimed 3,000 would attend; barely 300 came," he said, adding that participation from outside Chittapur would have violated the order.

'First time in 100 years they're following rules'

Earlier in the day, Kharge remarked that the RSS was following legal procedure "for the first time in 100 years".

"I only asked that they seek permission. They have a habit of not following the rule of law. Now they are. If they violate conditions, they will face action," he said.

National issues

On the Bihar election results, Priyank said they would not impact Karnataka politics. "Winning and losing is normal. But the vote share they received despite anti-incumbency raises questions. Let the detailed data come," he said.

He alleged the Election Commission acted selectively, saying it "stopped cash distribution in Telangana but not in Bihar."Reacting to BY Vijayendra and former minister Ashok's comments on Rahul Gandhi having an "iron leg", Kharge asked, "Have the RSS or BJP ever fought for the people? Have you ever seen a ganeshdar wipe people's tears? ***—Salar News***

CANINE WOES

Govt tells hospitals to comply with SC order on dog bites

BENGALURU, 16 NOV

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has urged all government and private hospitals in the state to strictly comply with the Supreme Court's new directives on the treatment of dog, snake and other animal-bite cases. The Minister issued the appeal in a post on X on Saturday, outlining the court's instructions.

According to the guidelines, private hospitals must treat animal-bite victims without demanding advance payment, and all hospitals are required to maintain mandatory stocks of anti-rabies vaccines and rabies immunoglobulin at all times. The Centre aims to eliminate dog-mediated rabies deaths by 2030, and the court stressed that uninterrupted availability of these medicines is essential.

Rabies has been declared a notifiable disease in Karnataka, and hospitals must report all cases to health authorities. Both government and private institutions must provide free anti-rabies vaccines, equine rabies immunoglobulin and essential first aid.

Hospitals have been instructed to offer immediate screening, administer first aid, and refer patients to higher centres if facilities are inadequate. The government will reimburse treatment costs under the SAST scheme, and action will be taken against hospitals that refuse care.

The court has also warned that medical negligence leading to death of patients in such cases could result in up to two years' imprisonment for the medical officer responsible and even cancellation of the hospital licences. ***—Salar News***

HM rules out leadership change amid reshuffle buzz

BENGALURU, 16 NOV

State Home Minister G Parameshwara has asserted that a Cabinet reshuffle is imminent, but reiterated there will be no change in leadership within the State. Speculation about a potential reshuffle intensified following Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's recent meeting with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi.

While there were discussions circulating about the reshuffle, Siddaramaiah clarified that his talks in Delhi were primarily focused on the Bihar election results, not on the Cabinet. However, sources within the Congress party suggested that discussions regarding the reshuffle had indeed taken place.

Speaking to reporters, Parameshwara remarked, "It is said that the high command has given permission for a reshuffle. The media is saying it, and this subject is coming out in the open. Normally, leadership changes do not happen when a Cabinet reshuffle takes place." He noted that several individuals have expressed interest in ministerial positions and concluded that the final decision rests with both the Chief Minister and the Congress high command.

Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi echoed Parameshwara's sentiments, stating, "Only the Chief Minister knows what discsion took place with the high command. The decision on the Cabinet reshuffle is left to him and the party top brass."

Moreover, DK Suresh, former MP and brother of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, added that the matter is ultimately in the hands of the CM and the party leadership, urging all to wait for official announcements.

—PTI

- While there were discussions circulating about the reshuffle, Siddaramaiah clarified that his talks in Delhi were primarily focused on the Bihar election results, not on the Cabinet.

Navy to commission anti-sub warfare vessel

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

The Indian Navy will commission the first of its indigenously built Mahe-class anti-submarine warfare shallow-water craft (ASW SWC) in Mumbai on 24 November, strengthening its coastal combat capabilities.

Built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), the vessel Mahe is described as a key milestone in the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, reflecting advances in Indian naval design and shipbuilding. The Navy said the compact yet powerful craft embodies "agility, precision and endurance" essential for dominating littoral waters.

Designed for submarine hunting, coastal patrols and securing critical maritime approaches, Mahe combines firepower, stealth and high manoeuvrability. It is equipped with torpedoes and anti-submarine rockets, and was formally delivered to the Navy on 23 October.

With more than 80 per cent indigenous content, the Mahe-class represents a new generation of shallow-water combatants showcasing India's expanding expertise in warship construction and systems integration.Named after the historic town of Mahe on the Malabar coast, the ship's crest features the Urumi, the flexible Kalarippayattu sword symbolising agility, precision and lethal grace. ***—PTI***

2 MURDER SUSPECTS SHOT AT WHILE ESCAPING

HUBBALLI, 16 NOV

Police in Hubballi shot two key murder accused in the legs on Sunday morning after they allegedly attacked officers and attempted to escape during a spot inspection. The incident is connected to the murder of 27-year-old Malik Jaan, who was reportedly stabbed to death by a group of eight to ten men on Mantur Road under Bendigeri police station limits three days earlier.

The main suspects, Balaraj alias Balu, and Mohammed Hafeez, had already been arrested along with several others. ***—PTI***

NATURE'S BOUNTY

Thousands of visitors thronged Krishi Mela at the University of Agricultural Sciences campus at GKVK, Bengaluru, on Sunday. The annual agricultural fair enthralled all with sunflower fields and insects on diplays, among other attractions
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

POST ATTACKS IN MYSURU

Villagers to wear human masks to confuse tigers

MYSURU, 16 NOV

Amid a rise in tiger attacks in villages bordering the Bandipur and Nagarhole tiger reserves, the Forest Department has distributed 10,000 masks designed with human facesto be worn on the back of the head to confuse tigers. This strategy, inspired by the Sunderbans in West Bengal, works because tigers are ambush predators that typically attack from behind and rarely strike when they believe they are being watched.

The initiative follows the deaths of three people near the Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, prompting combing operations and daily visits by forest staff. In the last 26 days, more than 10 tigers, including five cubs, have been captured in Mysuru district.

Mask distribution has begun in villages across Nanjangud, Saragur, Hunsur and HD Kote taluks. Villagers have been advised not to go alone to fields early in the morning or late at night and to stay in groups.

Bandipur Tiger Reserve Project Director S Prabhakaran said 5,000 masks have already been distributed.

The department is also procuring whistles and drums for field patrols and cattle grazing, and drones are being deployed to track tiger movement.Wildlife safaris in Bandipur and Nagarhole have been temporarily banned in view of the ongoing crisis. ***—Salar News***

29 blackbucks die of bacterial infection at Belagavi Zoo

BELAGAVI, 16 NOV

The death toll of blackbucks at the Kittur Rani Chennamma Mini Zoo rose to 29 on Sunday after another animal succumbed to a mysterious illness. The zoo has reported continuous fatalities since November 13, when eight blackbucks died.

A team of experts from Bannerghatta Veterinary College, Bengaluru, visited the zoo on Sunday to conduct post-mortem examinations and identify the cause of the deaths. Officials suspect a possible contagious disease, though the exact reason is yet to be confirmed.

Zoo authorities said precautionary measures have been taken to prevent the illness from spreading to other animals. On Saturday alone, 20 blackbucks died, pushing the toll to 28 before Sunday's additional fatality.

The sudden surge in deaths has heightened concerns about animal health and management practices at the mini zoo ***—Salar News***

PHOTO: X@ DrSJaishankar

EAM reaffirms support with Qatar, Bahrain

DOHA, 16 NOV

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Qatar's top leadership on 16 November, in Doha, focusing on strengthening the strategic partnership in energy, trade, and investment. Following discussions with Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Jaishankar expressed appreciation for their exchange on regional and global developments. He also reiterated India's commitment to enhancing relations during a meeting with Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. Simultaneously, Jaishankar conducted a phone call with Bahraini counterpart Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, reviewing their longstanding multifaceted partnership. Talks included ongoing negotiations for a trade deal and a double taxation avoidance agreement. *—PTI*

Uddhav made head of Bal Thackeray memorial trust

MUMBAI, 16 NOV

The Maharashtra government has reconstituted the Balasaheb Thackeray National Memorial Public Trust, appointing Shiv Sena (UBT) chief and former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray as chairman. The trust is responsible for constructing the memorial for Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray at the mayor's bungalow site in Mumbai. A new government notification names former minister Subhash Desai as secretary and MLA Aaditya Thackeray as a member. MLA Parag Alvani and former legislator Shishir Shinde have also been included. Five ex officio members senior state officials and the BMC commissioner will serve on the trust. Uddhav, Desai and Aaditya will have five-year terms, while Alvani and Shinde will serve for three years. *—PTI*

RSS leader's son shot dead in Punjab

FEROZEPUR, 16 NOV

A 32-year-old shopkeeper, Naveen Arora, the son of RSS leader Baldev Raj Arora, was shot dead in Ferozepur by two unidentified motorcycle-borne assailants, police said on Sunday. The attack took place on Saturday as Naveen was walking from his shop to his home near Dr Sadhu Chand Chowk. The assailants opened fire at close range and fled. He was taken to a private hospital but declared dead on arrival. Punjab BJP chief Sunil Jakhar accused the AAP government of failing to maintain law and order, saying gangsters were effectively running the state. Senior police officials, including SSP Bhupinder Singh, visited the scene and said CCTV footage was being examined to identify the attackers. *—PTI*

Panjab University delays exams amid protests

CHANDIGARH, 16 NOV

Panjab University has postponed all examinations scheduled from 18 to 20 November due to ongoing student protests over the long-delayed Senate polls. The Controller of Examinations said new dates will be announced later and advised students to check official updates. Students, protesting under the Panjab University Bachao Morcha, have vowed to boycott exams until the Senate election schedule pending approval from the chancellor is released. Despite the Centre withdrawing its plan to restructure the university's Senate and Syndicate, the agitation continues, with a "university shutdown" called for Monday. Major political parties and farmers' unions in Punjab have extended support. *—PTI*

Was told I gave Lalu dirty kidney: Rohini

She says Tejashwi should've donated kidney

PATNA, 16 NOV

Claiming that she was "cursed at" for donating a "dirty kidney" to her father Lalu Prasad in exchange for money and a party ticket, Rohini Acharya on Sunday said "she has been made an orphan", and advised all married women to refrain from saving "your God-like father if he has a son".

In an emotional outburst, 47-year-old Acharya, in a series of posts on X, said that "may no household give birth to a girl with a fate like that of Rohini".

The posts came a day after she announced that was quitting the party and disowning her family, while putting the blame for the RJD's debacle in the recent Bihar polls on her brother Tejashwi Yadav's close aides – RJD's MP Sanjay Yadav, who hails from Haryana, and Rameez, who is from a political family in Uttar Pradesh.

"I was cursed at and told that I am dirty, and that I got my father to have my dirty kidney transplanted into him, took crores of rupees, (and) bought a ticket," Acharya said.

The RJD won only 25 seats of the 243-strong Bihar assembly in the recent poll.

In an apparent dig at Tejashwi and his former personal assistant Sanjay, she said, "To all the married women, I will say that when there's a son in your maternal home, never, ever save your God-like father; instead, tell your brother, the son of that house, to get his own kidney or that of one of his Haryanvi friends transplanted."

"All sisters and daughters should look after their own homes and families, take care of their children and their in-laws' household without caring for their parents, think only about themselves," she added.

In another post, she alleged that she was verbally abused and a slipper was raised to hit her. *—PTI*

RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav (front) with daughter Rohini Acharya (left) and son Tejashwi Yadav (centre) during an event, in Saran district. Acharya left the RJD after the drubbing in the recent Bihar polls *PHOTO: PTI*

- Acharya said that Tejashwi's aides accused her of donating her kidney for money and party ticket. She said "don't save your God-like father.... when he has a son."

'Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a British agent'

SHAJAPUR, 16 NOV

Madhya Pradesh Minister and BJP leader Inder Singh Parmar has triggered a row by calling social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy, an "agent of the British" who started a "vicious cycle of religious conversion".

After facing outrage for his comment, the state Higher Education Minister on Sunday apologised, claiming it was a "slip of the tongue and he was sad about it".

Parmar made the controversial comment during an event held in Agar Malwa district on the 150th birth anniversary of tribal icon Birsa Munda.

The British had projected several people as "fake social reformers" and promoted those who encouraged conversions, he claimed.

West Bengal minister Shashi Panja said the statement made by Parmar on the social reformer showed that the party was trying to demean Bengal's intelligentsia.

RAJ BHAVAN ARMS ROW: GUV CALLS KALYAN AN IDIOT

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Sunday said he sought legal opinion over TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee's allegation of Raj Bhavan allowing the stacking of arms and ammunition, while taking recourse to a Shakespearean verse to describe the politician's demeanour.

Bose uttered a part of one of William Shakespeare's most famous verses from his tragedy, 'Macbeth': "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". *—PTI*

Bihar approves of 'gobi farming,' says Assam minister

GUWAHATI, 16 NOV

The use of 'gobi farming' imagery by an Assam Cabinet minister after Bihar poll results has evoked sharp criticism from Opposition, who alleged it to be an apparent reference to the Bhagalpur communal riots.

Assam Cabinet minister Ashok Singhal had, on X, shared a photograph of cauliflower farming with the caption "Bihar approves Gobi farming".

State Congress president and party's deputy leader in Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi said that the image is "widely associated with the Logain massacre of 1989, where 116 Muslims were killed and their bodies concealed under cauliflower plantations during the Bhagalpur violence".

Other leaders questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma over the matter, maintaining that it is a "new low in political discourse". Congress MP Shashi Tharoor also condemned the post. *—PTI*

VIJAY ASKS EC TO INCLUDE TVK IN ELECTORAL MEETINGS

CHENNAI, 16 NOV

TVK chief and actor-politician Vijay has urged the Election Commission to include his party in all electoral consultations, asserting that this step would enhance the electoral process.

In a representation to the Chief Election Commissioner dated 15 November, 2025, he emphasised TVK's established presence in Tamil Nadu and its commitment to the democratic process, stating, "Ensuring a level playing field for all political parties... forms an integral part of the basic structure of the Constitution."

Vijay highlighted that the current exclusion of TVK from consultative meetings undermines equality in participation. He requested that appropriate directions be issued to ensure TVK's involvement in all discussions on the election.

TVK PROTESTS SIR

Meanwhile, the TVK held a statewide demonstration against the SIR exercise being carried out across Tamil Nadu. TVK state general secretary N Anand and senior leader Adhav Arjuna led the protests in Chennai, while others including joint general secretary CTR Nirmalkumar took part in Madurai and propaganda secretary KG Arunraaj in Coimbatore.

Addressing the gathering at Chepauk, Arjuna said, "Vijay is not a candidate for the 2026 Assembly elections, but he will be the Chief Minister."

"This protest is not just for a small demand. But it is being held to place it on record that through the SIR exercise, the voting rights of people are removed," he said. *—PTI*

INVESTIGATIONS REVEAL

'White collar terrorists were scouting for bomber for a year'

NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR, 16 NOV

The sophisticated 'white-collar' terror module, spearheaded by a group of doctors recently busted by Jammu and Kashmir Police, had been actively scouting for a suicide bomber since last year, with key planner Dr Umar Nabi pushing the agenda, officials said on Sunday.

Interrogation of an arrested co-accused was indicative that Umar, believed to have been killed while driving the explosives-laden car that blew up near the Red Fort on 10 November, was a "hardcore radical" and insisted that a suicide bomber was essential for their operations.

Immediately, Srinagar police sent a team to Qazigund in south Kashmir and detained Jasir alias 'Danish', a bachelor in political sciences, on the basis of questioning of the co-accused, including Dr Adeel Rather and Dr Muzzaffar Ganaie.

Srinagar police led by its SSP, Dr GV Sundeep Chakravarthy, cracked the entire 'white collar' terror module.

The detained person agreed to have met the 'Doctor module' in October last year at a mosque in Kulgam from where he was taken to a rented accommodation at the Al Falah University in Faridabad, Haryana.

The detained person said that while others in the module wanted him to be an over-ground worker (OGW) for the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed, he was intensely brainwashed by Umar for several months.

The plan, however, collapsed in April after the man backed out, citing his economic condition and the belief that suicide was forbidden in Islam. *—PTI*

A woman seeks permission from security personnel to enter a blocked road leading to the Nowgam police station, where an accidental explosion occured late Friday night, killing at least nine people, in Srinagar *PHOTO: PTI*

Forensic error, not terror, blamed for J&K blast

Preliminary investigations into the accidental explosion that ripped through the Nowgam police station late Friday night, killing nine people, suggest that the use of excessive lighting by the forensic team may have triggered the massive blast, officials said Sunday. The explosion, which authorities maintain was an accident and not a terror attack, occurred while a team was extracting samples from the final boxes of seized explosive material transported from Al-Falah University in Faridabad, Haryana. The officials believe the last few boxes contained a liquid substance -- likely a mixture of Acetophenone, Hydrogen Peroxide, and Sulphuric Acid -- and in order to examine the liquid substance closely, the lighting arrangement was scaled up, leading to the massive explosion.

1 more held for posts on Delhi blast in Assam

One more person has been arrested in Assam for putting up social media posts supporting the Delhi blast, taking the total number of apprehensions in this regard to 21, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday.

Police probe 9mm bullets found near Red Fort blast site

Security agencies are probing three bullet cartridges, two of them live rounds, recovered from the debris near the Red Fort blast site, a source said on Sunday. The empty shell and two live bullets were found close to the burnt Hyundai i20 car.

Stalin launches free meal plan for sanitation workers

CHENNAI, 16 NOV

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has launched a free nutritious meals scheme for sanitation workers in Chennai, aimed at improving their health and working conditions. The scheme, which offers three meals a day, will be expanded to other parts of the state from 6 December.

Speaking at the launch at Kalaivanar Arangam on Saturday, Stalin praised sanitation workers for their dedication, noting that they continue working in scorching heat, heavy rain and even during floods. He said that Chennai's lakes, reservoirs and streets remain clean only because of their tireless efforts. Describing their service as selfless, he stressed that the government has a responsibility to protect their welfare.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin launches a free meal scheme in Chennai on Sunday *PHOTO: X@MKSTALIN*

As part of the initiative, the state will establish retiring rooms exclusively for sanitation workers in each of Chennai's 200 wards, with each room set on a 300 sq ft area.

The launch comes amid ongoing protests by Chennai sanitation workers, who are opposing the privatisation of solid waste management and demanding regularisation of their employment. *—PTI*

FOR VANNIYAR RESERVATION

Fill the jails: PMK calls for 17 Dec protests

CHENNAI, 16 NOV

PMK leader Dr Anbumani Ramadoss called for a statewide "fill the jails" agitation on 17 December, pressing for 15 per cent reservation for Vanniyars within the Backward Classes quota in Tamil Nadu.

He issued a call on Sunday to his party cadres and Vanniyars, asking them to lay siege to government offices across Tamil Nadu on the said date, to press the demand for internal reservation for Vanniyars in education and government employment. He said they will demonstrations in every Assembly constituency.

In a statement, Anbumani said that the stir is intended to both register the community's "pain" and demonstrate its "strength" in the face of what he termed repeated "betrayals of trust" by the ruling establishment.

Anbumani Ramadoss *PHOTO: PTI*

Recalling the Supreme Court's 31 March, 2022 order that there is no legal bar on granting internal reservation to Vanniyars if adequate data is gathered, the PMK leader said the "DMK government could have enacted a Vanniyar reservation law within 27 days of the verdict" but had not done so even after more than 1,300 days.

He said the party initially chose the path of dialogue, believing Chief Minister MK Stalin would move swiftly to implement the quota.

A PMK delegation met Stalin at the Secretariat on 8 May, 2022, where the Chief Minister assured them that a special session of the Assembly would be convened on the issue before admissions for the 2022 academic year began, Anbumani claimed.

PMK founder Dr S Ramadoss has also written 10 letters, held 10 telephonic conversations and met Stalin once in person, Anbumani said. "Every time, we were made to believe that reservation would definitely be given. " *—PTI*

- Dr Anbumani Ramadoss said that despite multiple assurances from Chief Minister MK Stalin, no progress had been made for Vanniyars reservation in education and government employment. He also noted a 2022 Supreme Court order which said that there was no legal bar on internal reservation for the community

Jagan says TDP workers destroyed YSRCP office

AMARAVATI, 16 NOV

YSRCP supremo YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has accused TDP leaders and local MLA N Balakrishna's followers of ransacking the Opposition party's office at Hindupur in Sri Sathyasai district.

Sharing a video of the alleged incident in a post on X, the former chief minister claimed, "The violent attack by TDP leaders and Balakrishna's followers on the YSRCP office in Hindupur is a direct assault on democracy itself. We strongly condemn this barbaric act."

The absolute inaction of the police makes this even more alarming, he alleged, adding that their silence is not negligence but a warning that Andhra Pradesh's "law and order machinery is being openly misused for Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's political agenda."

According to the opposition leader, TDP's alleged brutality in Hindupur shows that Naidu's leadership emboldens mobs, encourages violence, and tries to crush political opposition through fear.

"A government that cannot protect the basic democratic rights of its opponents has no moral right to speak about governance. We strongly condemn this attack. It is not just on YSRCP but on every citizen who believes in democracy and political freedom," the YSRCP chief said. *—PTI*

470 acres of poppy plantation in Manipur destroyed

IMPHAL, 16 NOV

Poppy plantations in over 470 acres of land have been destroyed in multiple drives in the hill districts of Manipur. A joint team of Manipur Police, Assam Rifles and CRPF destroyed poppy plantations in over 20 acres of land at Loibol Khullen village in Kangpokpi district on 15 November. In Kotlen village in the district, police, along with CRPF and forest officers, destroyed poppy plantations in nearly 20 acres Five huts used in the plantation were also burnt down. Poppy cultivations in around 436 acres of land were also destroyed from 11 to 15 November across Ukhrul district on the hill ranges of Somdal, Lamlai Chingfei and Litan. 51 huts were burnt down.—*PTI*

Man held for circulating fake currency in MP

BHOPAL, 14 NOV

A 21-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly printing and circulating fake currency in Madhya Pradesh's Bhopal. The accused, Vivek Yadav, a native of Uttar Pradesh, allegedly printed counterfeit notes at his rented accommodation in the Karond area and had circulated currency of Rs 6 lakh in the market over the past year. Based on a tip-off, the police raided Yadav's house and seized several tools and equipment, including a printing machine, and counterfeit notes with of over Rs 2.25 lakh. Yadav confessed that he had targeted small grocery stores and paan, gutkha shops in the outskirts of the city and handled everything himself. The police have registered a case against him. —*PTI*

3 Chhattisgarh Naxals with Rs 15 L bounty killed

SUKMA, 16 NOV

Three Naxalites, with a combined bounty of Rs 15 lakh, were killed during an operation by the District Reserve Guard (DRG) on Sunday in Sukma district. The confrontation occurred in the forested hills near Tumalpad village, and Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan reported that the gunfire exchange lasted an extended period. The deceased, two of whom were women, were influential members of local Naxalite factions known for their violent actions. Authorities recovered a .303 rifle and Barrel Grenade Launchers at the scene. Inspector General of Police Sundarraj Pattilingam stated, "Naxalism is nearing its end in Bastar," urging Maoist cadre to consider rehabilitation. This year, 262 Naxalites were neutralised. —*PTI*

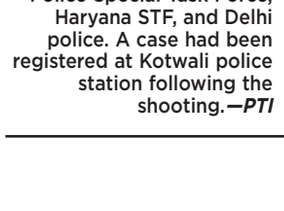


PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Disha's father gets gun license post attack on home

BAREILLY, 16 NOV

The Bareilly district administration has issued a weapons license to Jagdish Patani, father of actress Disha Patani. Jagdish Patani, a retired DSP, applied for the license after two unidentified assailants fired around ten rounds at his ancestral home on 12 September, 2025. Following the attack, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath assured him of security. Bareilly district magistrate Avnish Singh said the license, covering a revolver/pistol, was granted after all formalities were completed. The attackers, Ravindra and Arun, were killed on 17 September in Ghaziabad in an encounter involving the Uttar Pradesh Police Special Task Force, Haryana STF, and Delhi police. A case had been registered at Kotwali police station following the shooting.—*PTI*

ISRO to launch Chandrayaan-4 in 2028

ISRO to conduct 7 launches, the largest in a single year

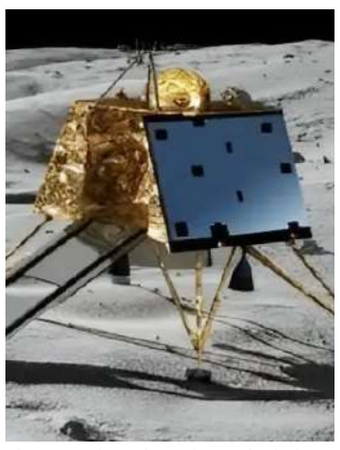
KOLKATA, 16 NOV

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is gearing up for one of its busiest times with seven more launches planned this financial year, even as India's first human spaceflight remains scheduled for 2027, its chairman **V Narayanan** said.

Narayanan said ISRO is preparing for a phase of rapid scaling in science, technology and industry capacity.

ISRO is targeting seven more launches before the end of the current financial year, including a commercial communication satellite, and multiple PSLV and GSLV missions. The launch of the first PSLV manufactured by the Indian industry will be a milestone.

The government has approved the Chandrayaan-4 mission, designed as a lunar sample-return.



The seven launches of ISRO includes a commercial communication satellite and multiple PSLV and GSLV missions *PHOTO: PTI*

LUPEX, the joint lunar polar exploration programme with Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, will study water ice at the lunar south pole.

ISRO is simultaneously working to triple its annual spacecraft production in the next three years to keep pace with expanding mission demand.

Narayanan said ISRO has begun work on an Indian Space Station, targeted for completion by 2035.

"The first of the five modules will be placed in orbit by 2028," he said.

On India's maiden human-spaceflight mission, Gaganyaan, Narayanan clarified that only the timeframe for uncrewed missions has shifted.

"Let me make it clear: the uncrewed mission was targeted for 2025. The crewed mission was always planned for 2027, and we are holding on to that date," he said.

Three uncrewed test missions will precede the first flight with Indian astronauts.

India's share in the global space economy is currently around 2 per cent, and ISRO is working towards increasing it to 8 per cent by 2030.

India's space economy is valued at around USD 8.2 billion at present. —*PTI*

Police personnel and other officials at the spot after a portion of a stone quarry collapsed in Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh. *PHOTO: PTI*

1 dead in UP stone quarry collapse

SONBHADRA, 16 NOV

The body of a labourer was pulled out on Sunday morning from the rubble of a stone quarry that collapsed here, while several others remain trapped, a senior police official said.

The exact number of people trapped is not known. Uttar Pradesh minister and local MLA Sanjeev Kumar Gond, who visited the spot in the Billi Markundi mining area after the collapse on 15 November, said "around a dozen labourers" might be under the debris.

Additional director general of police (ADG), Varanasi Zone, Piyush Mordia, said on Sunday that work to remove the debris from the hill has been going on since last night.

The body of one person has been recovered, while a search is underway for the others.

Police identified the deceased as Raju Singh, 30, from Panari village here.

The ADG said the stones that fell from the hill are quite large and the rescue efforts are taking time due to the need to work carefully.

Adequate equipment and resources are available, and the entire administration is engaged in the relief work, Mordia said.

District magistrate BN Singh had earlier said a wall inside the Krishna Mines quarry suddenly caved in, trapping the workers there.

Gond said the circumstances under which the mine had been operating would be investigated thoroughly and strict action would be taken against the guilty. —*PTI*

6 booked for barring devotees from entering Shimla mosque

SHIMLA, 16 NOV

Six people, including four women, have been booked for allegedly barring devotees from offering prayers at the Sanjauli mosque here, which was declared illegal by the court, police said on Sunday.

The incident occurred on 14 November when several people, hailing from other states, were headed to the mosque to offer prayers.

The accused, associated with Devbhoomi Sangharsh Samiti, stopped them from entering the mosque.

Police personnel arrived at the spot to resolve the issue; however, the accused raised slogans, asking the Muslim devotees to show their IDs and questioned how they could offer prayers in a mosque that was declared illegal and ordered to be demolished by the court.

Women argue with devotees near the mosque *PHOTO:SCREENGRAB*

The women said they would not allow Muslims to pass by their houses, alleging that they peered inside their homes.

A video of the incident went viral on social media.

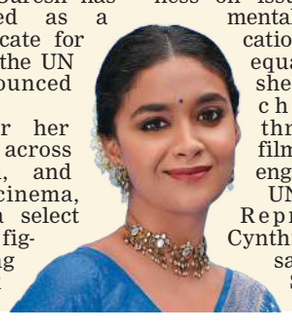
Taking cognisance of the issue, the accused were booked for disturbing communal harmony and law and order, the police said, adding that further investigation is being conducted. —*PTI*

Keerthy Suresh is UNICEF India Celebrity Advocate

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

National Award-winning actor Keerthy Suresh has been appointed as a Celebrity Advocate for UNICEF India, the UN agency announced today.

Renowned for her performances across Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam cinema, Suresh joins a select group of public figures supporting UNICEF's work for vulnerable children. In her new role, she will use her platform to raise awareness on issues including mental health, education, and gender equality, areas she has long championed through her films and public engagement.



UNICEF India Representative Cynthia McCaffrey said, "Keerthy Suresh's connection with audiences offers a powerful platform to advocate for children's rights and well-being. She brings passion and influence to our mission of reaching every child, especially the most vulnerable."

Suresh said she was honoured to take on the role. "Children are our greatest hope. Nurturing care builds the foundation for them to thrive. I am proud to join UNICEF India to inspire action for every child," the actress said. —*PTI*

Man acquitted in rape case over 'insufficient' proof of victim's age

THANE, 16 NOV

A Thane court has acquitted a man accused of raping a girl alleged to be a minor, due to insufficient evidence proving her age.

Special judge for POCSO Act cases, Ruby U Malvankar, noted the prosecution's failure to establish beyond reasonable doubt that the victim was under 18, as required under the POCSO Act.

The accused, a 22-year-old man from Bhayander, was arrested on 19 May, 2020, after allegations by the victim's mother. However, during the trial, the victim revealed they were in a "deep relationship" and stated her desire to marry the accused.

The court emphasised, "It is the primary onus on the prosecution to prove that the victim is a child."

The victim's mother claimed to have submitted a photcopy of her birth certificate.

The lack of the original birth certificate and admissions of a voluntary relationship led to the conclusion that the allegations did not substantiate and accused was acquitted. —*PTI*

SIT to conduct test on Sabarimala idol plates

PATHANAMTHITTA, 16 NOV

Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa Temple is ready to welcome lakhs of devotees as the 41-day Mandala pilgrimage begins on Monday. The temple doors will open Sunday evening, with rituals led by the Tantri (head priest) and Melshanthi (chief priest), alongside installation ceremonies for newly appointed Melshanthis of Sabarimala and Malikappuram temples.

The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) has ensured facilities for pilgrims, including resting benches, drinking water kiosks, hot water, chukkuvellam (dried ginger water), bio-toilets, emergency medical centers, and multilingual information boards. A virtual queue system will regulate daily numbers, and sanitation workers will maintain hygiene across the temple and trekking paths.

Meanwhile, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the 2019 gold disappearance will conduct scientific tests on the Dwarapalaka (guardian deity) plates and pillars on Monday after the Deva Anujna rituals, assessing gold purity and copper content.

TDB president K Jayakumar emphasised a smooth pilgrimage and strict action against any wrongdoing. —*PTI*

CJI backs creamy layer's exclusion in SC quota

AMRAVATI, 16 NOV

Chief Justice of India BR Gavai on Sunday affirmed that he is still for exclusion of creamy layer in reservations to Scheduled Castes.

Addressing a programme "India and the Living Indian Constitution at 75 Years", Gavai opined that children of an IAS officer cannot be equated with the offsprings of a poor agricultural laborer when it comes to reservations.

"I also went further and took a view that the concept of creamy layer, as has been found in the judgment of Indra Sawhney (vs Union of India & Others). What is applicable to the other backward classes, should also be made applicable to scheduled castes, though my judgment has been widely criticised on that issue," Gavai said.

The CJI said over the years, equality or women empowerment is gaining momentum in the country.

Justice Gavai observed in 2024 that states must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) and deny them the benefit of reservation.

Asserting that the Indian Constitution is not "static", Justice Gavai said Dr BR Ambedkar always considered that it has to be evolving, organic, and a state-of-the-art living document as Article 368 provides for the amendment of the Constitution. —*PTI*

257 held in single day in Haryana

CHANDIGARH, 16 NOV

The Haryana Police on Sunday said, with the arrest of 257 on 14 November, it achieved a major breakthrough in making the state safer during the statewide 'Operation Trackdown'.

The intensive operation, carried out under the directions of DGP Haryana OP Singh, led to the arrest of 76 dreaded accused involved in heinous crimes. 181 more people wanted in other cases were apprehended.

42 cases related to serious crimes such as murder, attempt to murder, extortion, and illegal weapons were registered, resulting in nearly 62 criminals being sent to jail.

DGP Haryana OP Singh *PHOTO: ANI*

- The intensive operation, carried out under the directions of DGP Haryana OP Singh, led to the arrest of 76 dreaded accused involved in heinous crimes. 181 people wanted in other cases were apprehended.

While 23 arrests were made in nine murder cases, 16 arrests were made in 13 attempt-to-murder cases.

Fifteen criminals were nabbed in 14 cases under the Arms Act.

The state-wide campaign "Operation Trackdown", launched on 5 November, is a special initiative by the Haryana Police against organised crime and absconding criminals, under which consistent and large-scale action is being taken. —*PTI*

27% LACK AWARENESS

15.6% of Mumbaikars are pre-diabetic: BMC

MUMBAI, 16 NOV

A civic survey in Mumbai has indicated that only 27 per cent of residents are aware of the harmful effects of excessive sugar consumption, while 15.6 per cent are in the pre-diabetic stage.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) appealed to residents to reduce sugar consumption and read food labels carefully before consuming processed foods.

BMC commissioner and administrator Bhushan Gagrani had requested citizens to participate in the 'Healthy Campus Initiative', launched on the occasion of World Diabetes Day on 14 November 14, to encourage healthier dietary and lifestyle practices.

According to the World Health Organisation's Global Burden of Disease Studies, one in three people worldwide suffers from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes and hypertension, a civic release said.

The BMC screened 5,59,751 individuals for diabetes and hypertension across its health institutions from August 2022 to October 2025.

Under the ongoing 'Salt and Sugar Campaign 2025', launched in January across 24 administrative wards, the BMC aims to create awareness about balanced nutrition and preventive healthcare.

The civic body said dietary counselling is now available at all civic health centres, with over 1.59 lakh diabetic patients having benefited so far.

More than 1.2 lakh patients are currently receiving diabetes treatment at the civic dispensaries and Hindu Hriday Samrat Balasaheb Thackeray Aapla Dawakhana clinics (meant for the poor people), it said.

The civic body appealed to the people to make use of the diabetes and hypertension testing facilities available at these dispensaries and clinics.

NCD corners have been set up in 26 municipal hospitals for blood pressure and diabetes screening for people above 30 years of age. —*PTI*

IIT-M detects markers of anxiety in students

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

Researchers at IIT Madras have identified physiological markers that can help detect students most vulnerable to test anxiety, offering a potential shift in how schools and universities manage stress.

The study, published in 'Behavioural Brain Research', shows that the brain and heart interact differently in students under exam pressure, providing a scientific basis for early identification and personalised coping strategies.

Test anxiety affects around 81 per cent of Indian students, according to NCERT (2022), often hindering academic performance and long-term mental health.

Some students perform well under pressure, while others resort to avoidance behaviour.

The research focused on objective physiological data, highlighting two key markers: Frontal Alpha Asymmetry (FAA), indicating emotional regulation, and Heart Rate Variability (HRV), reflecting the heart's adaptive control. Students with negative FAA patterns showed weaker heart regulation under stress, increasing anxiety susceptibility.

The findings could enable AI-driven, non-invasive monitoring of at-risk students and support personalised stress management programmes.

The team plans to expoand research with larger groups of participants and advanced techniques to map the brain and heart in people. —*PTI*

BREATHLESS DELHI

People walk near Kartavya Path amid dense smog as the air quality remains poor, in New Delhi on Sunday . Breathing in Delhi now is like smoking 12 cogarrettes a day, say scientists ***PHOTO: ANI***

THE JAN SURAAJ DEBACLE

Why political 'startups' fail to become 'unicorns'

Prashant Kishor's party Jan Suraaj failed to open its account in any of the 238 seats it contested ***PHOTO: PTI***

The debacle of Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraaj party in the Bihar assembly elections has put the spotlight on the phenomenon of several such political 'startups' sprouting in the crowded political battleground but very few becoming 'unicorns'.

While the Jan Suraaj may be the latest to bite the dust, there have been other parties that created a strong buzz but failed to succeed at the hustings such as actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam, which drew a blank in the 2021 Tamil Nadu assembly polls.

Going forward, all eyes are now on the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), founded last year by actor-turned-politician Vijay. The party has created a strong buzz and with several political 'startups' formed by movie stars doing well in the past in the South, there are high expectations from it in the Tamil Nadu assembly polls next year.

Former Congress leader and political analyst Sanjay Jha said political 'startups' find it difficult to get going as ideological clarity takes time to accomplish, and claimed that India has become more conservative, less risk-taking, and ossified by conversations on traditionalism.

There are very small 'startup' parties as well such as the Plurals party in Bihar headed by Pushpam Priya Choudhary. Her party has contested two consecutive assembly polls in Bihar but drew a blank in both.

Then there are small parties that have limited ambitions and survive in pockets such as Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) and Upendra Kushwaha's Rashtriya Lok Morcha.

In Uttar Pradesh, there are parties like NISHAD Party, Peace Party, Apna Dal (Sonelal) and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party.

In India, parties keep getting formed and disappear after a poor showing at the hustings, hardly creating any buzz. But this cannot be said about Kishor's Jan Suraaj because it created more than a splash, with many predicting that it could emerge as the next Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the Bihar polls.

However, the media euphoria around it proved to be a mirage as the party failed to open its account in any of the 238 seats it contested.

According to the Election Commission, most of the Jan Suraaj candidates secured less than 10 per cent of the total votes polled and had their deposits forfeited.

Barring exceptions, parties in India that have gained a foothold are broadly characterised into three categories - arising out of a movement, built around a household name, personality or a dynasty, and developed around a social or religious group or a specific ideology.

Kishor was a known personality but not like the ones that have succeeded in the past with most being movie stars or established politicians.

There are six national parties -- BJP, Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM), National People's Party (NPP), and AAP.

While the Congress arose from the freedom movement, the BJP arose from an ideology and gained from the Ram Janmabhoomi movement.

The CPI(M) was built around ideology.

Very few political 'startups' have done well since the rise of the regional Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in 1982 and that too was formed on the popularity of movie star NT Rama Rao.

Parties that have emerged as regional powerhouses after that such as West Bengal's Trinamool Congress, Biju Janata Dal in Odisha and AIMIM in Telangana have gained due to a known political figure who broke away from the parent party (Mamata Banerjee) or due to dynastic goodwill (Naveen Patnaik and Asaduddin Owaisi). Though AIMIM was formed much earlier, it gained popularity under Owaisi.

Other parties such as Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) are also examples that fall in either of the two categories -- breakaway factions or dynastic goodwill.

The Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) was built around a movement for the protection of Dalits and has had limited success in Tamil Nadu.

Sanjay Kumar, a psephologist and former director at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), does not believe in the notion that political 'startups' work more in the South than the North but stated that it depends on specific factors.

"If your face is recognisable and you have a big personality. In the South, most of the examples are of movie stars. Your face should be absolutely recognised by the common people and not your work but your face. Second, the party formed against the backdrop of some movements for example the Aam Aadmi Party.

"The parties that have failed, including Prashant Kishor's party, don't fit into either of the two criteria." *—PTI*

SALAR ساہر

Andhra bets big on 'Brand Naidu' to woo investors

Returning to power on the promise of restoring Andhra Pradesh's economic glory, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is pulling out all stops to recreate for the state the transformative growth he once delivered in Hyderabad.

Since returning to power in May last year, Naidu has launched an aggressive, image-driven push to market what his team now calls "Brand Naidu' - a leadership-centric pitch aimed at restoring investor confidence and accelerating capital flows into the state to not just boost its economy but also create jobs.

From Google to Ambani and Adani, a slate of global and Indian majors has already lined up a record USD 150 billion in investment commitments.

In an interview with PTI, Naidu touted how, in just 18 months, he has managed to pull USD 20 billion of investments across a range of sectors and, in the past two days, signed MoUs for more than Rs 11 lakh crore (about USD 132 billion) of investment commitments at the Andhra Pradesh Investment Summit here.

"Different politicians will produce different models. Hyderabad is a model (I created)...all the infrastructure, knowledge economy, everything I have done. Today, it is the most livable city," he said, reeling out numbers on the city being amongst the ones with the highest per capita income in the country and boosting an economy that has 60 per cent contribution coming from services.

After the bifurcation of the state, Hyderabad went to Telangana. Naidu is now looking to replicate the success of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, but at a much faster pace and several times higher.

The state is not just focusing on technology sectors - data centres to drone hub - but also traditional brick and motor industries, such as steel plants and oil refineries, to create a ripple effect, pulling the newest state into the top league.

Asked why investors should look at investing in Andhra Pradesh, he said for a simple reason - the brand.

"One is brand," he said. Investors should look at Brand Naidu, and what it promises and what it delivers.

"Brand is created by individuals. Ultimately, that brand will be for (the benefit) of the state or the country," he pointed out.

Also, Andhra Pradesh has all the advantages - fertile land, very, very intelligent people, a sea coast of more than 1,000 kilometres, a manufacturing hub and a knowledge economy, the chief minister noted.

In a state still rebuilding after years of economic stagnation, Naidu is positioning himself as the differentiator: a tech-savvy, investment-friendly administrator with a track record of turning ideas into infrastructure.

And this branding is not just for political optics - it is a strategic attempt to reassure global and domestic investors that Andhra Pradesh once again has a stable, predictable, and business-first government, he said.

Naidu, with assistance from his young and energetic son Nara Lokesh, has revived his trademark: high-octane investment diplomacy, direct calls to CEOs, targeted meetings at global summits, and curated presentations, highlighting Andhra Pradesh's ports, industrial corridors, and IT talent pool. The messaging is designed to project efficiency and leadership continuity - areas where investors have sought reassurance.

Google last month announced a USD 15 billion investment in an AI data centre in Visakhapatnam linked to new energy sources and a fibre-optic network. Business tycoon Gautam Adani's company AdaniConneX would partner with Google on the project, along with Bharti Airtel, the country's No. 2 wireless carrier.

Reliance Industries too plans to set up a 1-gigawatt AI data centre in the state, while ArcelorMittal has announced plans to invest Rs 1.4 lakh crore to build India's largest greenfield steel plant in Anakapalli. Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) is setting up a Rs 95,000 crore refinery in the state.

Over the past two days, some of the major investment commitments included USD 12 billion by Brookfield in a clean energy-powered 3 GW data centre, Rs 60,000 crore commitment by ReNew in solar ingot and wafer manufacturing, green ammonia plant, pumped hydro project and renewable energy power plant and Rs 54,000 crore by AM Green in an array of projects.

Naidu is targeting an economic growth of 15 per cent for the state and looking to attract USD 1 trillion over the next 10 years.

To investors, Naidu is offering technology-driven governance, including ambitions for smart cities and digital services, proactive policy frameworks with single-window clearances, infrastructure-first development particularly around ports, logistics and energy, and quick decision-making. *—PTI*

Asked why investors should look at investing in Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said for a simple reason - the brand ***PHOTO: X@ncbn***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Kremlin taps its citizens to pay the cost of war

Ruins of what was the Ukrainian town of Kostyantynivka, the site of heavy battles with the Russian troops in the Donetsk region, Ukraine ***PHOTO: PTI***

After two years of robust growth fuelled by military spending on the war in Ukraine, Russia's economy is slowing. Oil revenues are down, the budget deficit is up and defence spending has levelled off.

The Kremlin needs money to keep its finances steady — and it's clear where President Vladimir Putin intends to get it: at the cash register, from ordinary people and small businesses.

An increase in value-added tax to 22 per cent from 20 per cent is expected to add as much as 1 trillion rubles, or about USD 12.3 billion, to the state budget. The increase is contained in legislation already making its way through Russia's compliant parliament and would take effect from January 1.

HIGHER TAXES AND FEES COMING SOON

On top of the rate increase, the legislation lowers the threshold for requiring businesses to collect VAT to a mere 10 million rubles (about USD 1,23,000) in annual sales revenue, in stages by 2028. That's down from 60 million rubles, or USD 7,39,000. That change is aimed in part at tax avoidance schemes in which companies split their operations to skirt the threshold.

But it also will hit previously exempt businesses like corner convenience stores and beauty salons.

The government also has proposed increasing taxes on spirits, wine, beer, cigarettes and vapes. Fees for renewing driver's licences or getting an international licence also are going up, and a key tax break on imported cars is being axed. The government is weighing a tech tax on digital equipment including smartphones and notebooks of up to 5,000 rubles (USD 61.50) for the highest priced items, the Kommersant news site reported.

The economic slowdown and tax increases are signs that Putin and ordinary Russians will face harder choices in the months ahead between guns and butter — that is, between military spending and consumer welfare after 3 1/2 years of war against Ukraine.

TAX INCREASES BRING DISMAY AND SHRUGS

Muscovites interviewed on a main street in the Russian capital by The Associated Press expressed dismay mingled with resignation, saying the higher food prices would be widely felt, especially in poorer regions and among those with low incomes.

Pensioner Svetlana Martynova said making small businesses collect VAT would backfire.

"I think that small and medium businesses will fold," she said. "The budget will get less, not more."

On top of VAT, registering a car will cost more

The VAT increase comes on top of changes in the recycling fee paid for registering cars, a step that mostly hits high-priced imports. From Dec. 1 individuals can no longer get a concessionary rate of 3,400 rubles (USD 42) on cars with more than 160 horsepower, but must pay the commercial rate, which can be hundreds of thousands of rubles, or thousands of dollars, per car.

SLOW GROWTH & BUDGET DEFICIT

Russia's economy shrank at the start of 2025 and is on course for growth this year of only around 1 per cent, according to government estimates, after growing more than 4 per cent in 2023 and 2024. Growth has suffered from high central bank interest rates, currently at 16.5 per cent, aimed at controlling inflation of 8 per cent fuelled by massive military spending.

Oil revenues are down about 20 per cent this year mainly due to lower global prices, according to the Kyiv School of Economics Institute. Western sanctions imposed over the war against Ukraine have been an ongoing drag on growth.

As a result, this year's budget deficit has been revised upward from 0.5 per cent to 2.6 per cent, up from 1.7 per cent last year. That doesn't seem huge in comparison with other countries — but unlike them, Russia can't borrow on international bond markets and must rely on domestic banks for credit.

Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said raising revenue was preferable to increasing borrowing, saying excessive borrowing "would lead to a speeding up of inflation, and as a result, to an increase in the key rate" from the central bank that would hurt investment and growth.

The VAT increase could boost inflation at first as merchants change their price lists. But over the longer term, it could lower price pressures by dampening demand for goods — and help the central bank in its battle to keep inflation in check.

THE KREMLIN'S HARD CHOICES

Putin won't run out of money in the short term, said Alexandra Prokopenko, fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Centre in Berlin.

"Growth is slowing down, but corporates are paying taxes, people are consuming and getting salaries, and paying taxes from this," she said. "For the coming 12 or 14 months, Putin has enough money to maintain the current war effort and the current level of expenditures."

After that, she said, "he will need to make tough choices, trade-offs between maintaining military effort or, for example, maintaining consumer abundance so people won't feel 100 per cent that the war is going on." *—PTI*

Seven killed in firecracker factory blast in Pak

KARACHI, 16 NOV

At least seven individuals were killed and several injured following a powerful explosion at an unlicensed firecracker manufacturing factory in the Latifabad area of Hyderabad, Sindh province, on Saturday night. Rescue 1122 officials reported that the explosion caused part of the house to collapse, resulting in fears that more victims, including children, are still trapped beneath the rubble. Latifabad Assistant Commissioner Saud Lund confirmed the illegal operation and said the factory owner, Asad Zai, had absconded. Three of the six injured are in critical condition with 98 per cent burns. This incident follows an earlier explosion in Karachi in August that killed two and injured 33. Chief Minister of Sindh, Murad Ali Shah, has ordered a probe. *—PTI*

China holds 'bomber patrol' in South China Sea

BEIJING, 16 NOV

The Chinese military for the first time conducted a "bomber formation patrol" with its fighter jets over the disputed South China Sea on Sunday as a "warning" to the Philippines after its navy conducted joint patrols with the US and Japan. China, which claims most of the South China Sea, is locked in an intractable maritime dispute with the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan. China also sent its Coast Guard through the waters of the Senkaku islands outlying Japanese territory as Beijing ramps up tensions over the Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's remarks on Taiwan. Takaichi recently said that any use of military force by China against Taiwan could be a "survival-threatening situation" for Japan. *—Agencies*

Constitutional amendment: Pak lawyers to protest

LAHORE, 16 NOV

Lawyers in Lahore announced a strike on Monday to protest Pakistan's 27th Constitutional Amendment, which they say undermines judicial independence. The amendment, signed by President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday, creates a Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) and introduces the post of Chief of Defence Forces. Three judges — Supreme Court Justices Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Athar Minallah, and Lahore High Court Justice Shams Mehmood Mirza — have resigned, calling the move an assault on the Constitution. The Lahore High Court Bar Association praised their stance and urged more judges to follow suit.*—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Disability rights activist Alice Wong dies at 51

SAN FRANCISCO, 16 NOV

Alice Wong, a prominent disability rights activist and author, has died at the age of 51 from an infection in a San Francisco hospital, as confirmed by her close friend, Sandy Ho. Wong, born with muscular dystrophy to Hong Kong immigrants, was a powerful advocate for the autonomy of people with disabilities, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds. Ho described Wong as a "luminary" who contributed significantly to the disability justice movement. In a statement she shared before her death, Wong reflected on her journey, emphasising the importance of shared stories and cultural representation. Recognised as a MacArthur Foundation fellow in 2024, Wong's legacy is that individuals with disabilities deserve to voice their own narratives and speak for themselves.*—PTI*

Mexico's Gen Z revolt after mayor's murder

Prez accuses Right of hijacking movement

MEXICO CITY, 16 NOV

Several thousands of Gen Z protesters took to the streets of Mexico City, demanding security and a crackdown on crime after the popular Michoacan Mayor Carlos Manzo was shot on the Mexican Day of the Dead earlier this month.

Many of the young protesters on Saturday said they are frustrated with systemic problems like corruption and impunity for violent crimes.

"We need more security" said Andres Massa, a 29-year-old business consultant who carried the pirate skull flag that has become a global symbol of Gen Z protests.

Arizbeth Garcia, a 43-year-old physician who joined the protests said she was marching for more funding for the public health system, and for better security because doctors "are also exposed to the insecurity gripping the country, where you can be murdered and nothing happens."

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum had earlier accused Right-wing parties of trying to infiltrate the Gen Z movement, and of using bots on social media to try to increase attendance.

This week, some "Gen Z" social media influencers said they no longer backed

Protesters charge at police during a youth-led anti-government march in Mexico City, on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Saturday's protests, while elderly figures like former president Vicente Fox, and Mexican billionaire Ricardo Salinas Pliego published messages in support of the protests.

Notably the protests were attended by people from several age groups, with supporters of Manzo, attending the protest wearing the straw hats that symbolise his political movement.

"The state is dying," said Rosa Maria Avila, a 65-year-old real estate agent. "He was killed because he was a man who was sending officers into the mountains to fight delinquents. He had the guts to confront them."

In several countries this year, members of the demographic group born between the late 1990s and early 2010s have organised protests against inequality, democratic backsliding and corruption.

The largest "Gen Z" protests took place in Nepal in September, following a ban on social media, and led to the resignation of the prime minister. Similar protests in Madagascar led to a military coup. *—Agencies*

Philippines protests corruption scandal

Thousands call out flood relief kickbacks

MANILA, 16 NOV

Thousands gathered on Sunday for the start of a three-day rally organised by a religious group in the Philippine capital to demand accountability over a flood-control corruption scandal that has implicated powerful members of Congress and top government officials.

It's the latest show of outrage over accusations of widespread corruption in flood-control projects in one of the world's most typhoon-prone countries, which has erupted in recent months following the discovery that thousands of flood defence projects across the country were made from substandard materials or simply did not exist.

Construction companies were accused of giving dozens of influential politicians and officials huge kickbacks in order to win lucrative contracts and avoid accountability for anomalies in the projects.

Police estimated that 27,000 members of the Iglesia Ni Cristo, or Church of Christ, gathered in Manila's Rizal Park before noon, many wearing white and carrying anti-corruption placards, for the afternoon demonstration. Other groups were scheduled

Drone footage of thousands of demonstrators in Manila, led by the politically powerful Iglesia Ni Cristo on Sunday *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

to hold a separate anti-corruption protest later Sunday at the "People Power" monument in suburban Quezon City.

Iglesia is an influential group that votes as a bloc and is courted by political candidates during elections.

The police, backed by the military, went on full alert and deployed thousands of personnel to secure the weekend rally, although the government expects the weekend rallies to be peaceful, according to a confidential security assessment.

Flood control is an especially sensitive issue in the Philippines, one of the Asian countries most prone to deadly typhoons, flooding and extreme weather. Two typhoons left at least 259 dead this month, mostly from flash floods and landslides, as millions of others were forced to evacuate.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr has been trying to quell public outrage, saying on Thursday that many of the powerful senators, members of Congress and wealthy businesspeople involved in the scandal would be in jail by Christmas. *—PTI*

Putin calls Bibi ahead of UN's Gaza vote

MOSCOW/KYIV/ HALVALA, 16 NOV

Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the situation in Gaza and the region with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over a phone call.

They had a lengthy discussion over the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, which was brokered by US President Donald Trump, along with the exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, a joint statement said. The two leaders also discussed the status of Iran's nuclear program and issues related to the further stabilisation of Syria.

The call comes ahead of the UN Security Council (UNSC) voting on the deployment of an international peacekeeping force in Gaza, part of the US' 20-point ceasefire plan. Russia has opposed the proposal saying that peace in the region requires a two-state solution. Russia has tabled an alternative peace plan before the UNSC.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke on the phone *PHOTO: X*

WORKING ON POW SWAP: ZELENSKYY

Ukraine is working to resume prisoner exchanges with Russia that could bring home 1,200 Ukrainian prisoners, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Sunday, a day after his national security chief announced progress in negotiations.

"We are ... counting on the resumption of POW exchanges," Zelenskyy wrote on X. "Many meetings, negotiations and calls are currently taking place to ensure this."

NO UKRAINE CEASEFIRE SOON: FINLAND

A ceasefire in Ukraine is unlikely before the spring and European allies need to keep up support despite a corruption scandal which has engulfed Kyiv, Finnish President Alexander Stubb said. Several senior Ukrainian leaders, including the energy minister resigned last week. *—Agencies*

B'desh ramps up security ahead of Hasina verdict

DHAKA, 16 NOV

Security agencies in Bangladesh are on high alert as the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-BD) prepares to deliver its verdict on Monday against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, accused of crimes against humanity during last year's anti-government protests. Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury stated, "The law enforcement agencies have already completed their necessary preparations" to prevent the unrest.

The tribunal will issue its decision on Hasina, 78, and her former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal on Monday. Both are charged with murder, attempted the murder, and torture, among other allegations, while Kamal testified as a state witness.

Chief prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam has called for the death penalty, branding Hasina the "mastermind" of the violence that led to 1,400 deaths during the July Uprising.

Hasina, who fled to India last year, described the ICT-BD as a "kangaroo court." Following her ousting in August 2024, the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus has sought her extradition. *—PTI*

DON INSTIGATING DEATH THREATS AGAINST ME: EX-ALLY MARJORIE

WASHINGTON, 16 NOV

Republican lawmaker Marjorie Taylor Greene on Saturday said US President Donald Trump was fuelling death threats against her.

On Friday, Trump withdrew his endorsement of Republican lawmaker over his stance on the Epstein files. Greene had been a vocal supporter of Trump.

"The man I supported and helped get elected," Greene wrote on X. "Aggressive rhetoric attacking me has historically led to death threats and multiple convictions of men who were radicalised by the same type rhetoric being directed at me right now. This time by the President of the United States.... As a woman I take threats from men seriously," she added.

Greene had earlier accused Trump of intimidating Republicans to prevent the release of documents related to the late convicted sex trafficker Jeffery Epstein. *—Agencies*

ICE increases presence in Charlotte

CHARLOTTE, 16 NOV

Federal authorities have confirmed a surge in immigration enforcement activities in Charlotte, North Carolina, where agents have begun making arrests across the city. "We are surging DHS law enforcement to Charlotte to ensure Americans are safe and public safety threats are removed," stated Assistant Homeland Security Secretary Tricia McLaughlin.

Local officials, including Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles, have expressed concern, saying the enforcement actions "are causing unnecessary fear and uncertainty." They reassured residents, stating, "We want people in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to know we stand with all residents who simply want to go about their lives."

Reports indicate an increase in Border Patrol and ICE agents, leading to numerous stops. Willy Aceituno, a US citizen of Honduran descent,

Border Patrol and ICE agents have been increasingly seen in Charlotte, with an increase in stops *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

recounted that Border Patrol agents pulled him from his vehicle, breaking his window and demanding to verify his citizenship.

Governor Josh Stein noted that "the vast majority" of those detained have no criminal convictions, urging residents to record any "inappropriate behaviour" they witness. *—PTI*

Pak, Jordan ink ties on culture, media and edu

ISLAMABAD, 16 NOV

Pakistan and Jordan signed four MoUs aimed at fostering cooperation in culture, media, and education during a ceremony at the Prime Minister House in Islamabad. Present at the event were Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and King Abdullah II of Jordan.

The agreements include a Programme for Cultural Cooperation, the establishment of Urdu and Pakistan Studies chairs at the University of Jordan, and collaborations between Pakistan Television and Jordan Radio and Television Corporation, as well as the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation.

The leaders discussed enhancing strategic and economic ties, with a focus on trade, investment, and security. *—PTI*

'END OF GOLDEN TICKETS'

UK to overhaul asylum rules; reduce protection

LONDON, 16 NOV

The UK is set to drastically reduce protections for refugees and end automatic benefits for asylum seekers, the Labour government announced late Saturday.

People granted asylum in the UK will have to wait 20 years before they can apply to settle permanently, under plans due to be announced by Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood on Monday, as the government aims to follow a Denmark-style policy.

People who are granted asylum will only be allowed to stay in the UK temporarily, with their refugee status regularly reviewed and those whose home countries are then deemed safe told to return.

Asylum claims in Britain are at record levels, with some 1,11,000 applications filed in the year leading to June 2025 *PHOTO: UN*

Mahmood said that she would "end the UK's golden ticket for asylum seekers," as the Labour government appears to succumb to the pressure from Britain's anti-immigration far-Right. She said that the policy aims to curb the inflow of small-boat refugees and migrants.

Currently refugee status lasts for five years, after which people can apply for indefinite leave to remain in the country. Mahmood aims to cut it to two-and-a-half years.

Asylum claims in Britain are at record levels, with some 1,11,000 applications filed in the year leading to June 2025, according to official data.

"Illegal migration is tearing our country apart," Mahmood told the Sunday times. The overhaul was "designed to essentially say to people: do not come to this country as an illegal migrant, do not get on a boat". *—Agencies*

Communism or far-Right? Chile votes for new Prez

SANTIAGO, 16 NOV

- The election marks the first time all eligible citizens must vote, resulting in millions of new voters.

Chile votes for its next president on Sunday, amidst rising fears over crime and immigration. The election is likely to lead to a runoff, as none of the candidates are projected to secure the 50 per cent needed to win outright.

The contest presents a choice between two polar opposites: Jeannette Jara, a 51-year-old communist and former labour minister, and Right-wing candidate José Antonio Kast, 59, an ultraconservative lawyer. Both candidates emphasise public security, as gang-related crime linked to Venezuelan immigration has surged. Political scientist Rodolfo Disi notes, "They're vying for the centre".

This election marks the first time all eligible citizens must vote, resulting in millions of new voters. "It's a huge question," says Robert Funk, an associate professor of political science. With rising crime and economic stagnation, candidates propose strict immigration policies, with Kast advocating for a massive wall and deportations. Many voters like Juan Pablo Sánchez, a Venezuelan immigrant, feel conflicted. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Force Motors plan global expansion with Rs 2,000 cr

MUMBAI, 3 NOV
NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

Force Motors is preparing to expand its presence in global markets and the defense sector after strengthening its position in India, Managing Director Prasan Firodia said. Now debt-free for two quarters, the company has approved a Rs 2,000-crore investment over three years to modernise facilities, boost digitisation, enhance its sales network and roll out electric products.

With over 70 per cent market share in the Traveller segment, Force Motors aims to leverage its shared-mobility platforms Traveller and Urbania for international growth, targeting new markets in Latin America and Africa. The firm is also developing EV versions, including the Traveller Electric ambulance.

Force Motors is expanding its Gurkha-based defense offerings and recently reported record second-quarter profits of Rs 350 crore. *—PTI*

e-Jagriti speeds up India's consumer redressal

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

The government's e-Jagriti digital consumer grievance platform has processed nearly 1.3 lakh cases since launching in January, with over 2 lakh users, including NRIs, registered, the Consumer Affairs Ministry said on Sunday. As of 13 November, 1,27,058 cases had been resolved. The portal enables NRIs to file complaints worldwide through OTP-based logins, online payments, digital document uploads and virtual hearings. This year, NRIs filed 466 cases, led by the US (146), Britain (52) and the UAE (47).

Gujarat registered the most cases (14,758), followed by Uttar Pradesh (14,050) and Maharashtra (12,484). *—PTI*

India buys €2.5B worth of Russian oil in October

India was the 2nd largest buyer after China despite sanctions

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

The US imposed sanctions on Russian giants Rosneft and Lukoil on 22 October, aiming to squeeze the Kremlin's war finances *PHOTO: PTI*

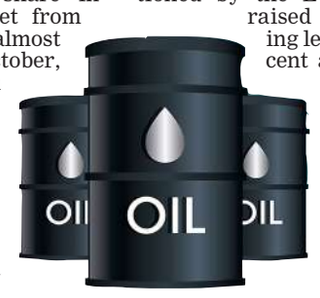
India, the world's second-largest buyer of Russian oil, spent Euro 2.5 billion on crude imports from Moscow in October, maintaining the same level of spending as in September, even as new sanctions loomed over major Russian energy firms, according to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

CREA's monthly tracking report showed that India remained the second-biggest buyer of Russian fossil fuels after China, importing a total of Euro 3.1 billion worth of energy in October. Crude oil made up 81 per cent (Euro2.5 billion) of India's imports, followed by coal at Euro 351 million and oil products at Euro222 million.

The US imposed sanctions on Russian giants Rosneft and Lukoil on 22 October, aiming to squeeze the Kremlin's war finances. These sanctions have led companies such as Reliance Industries, HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd, and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd to temporarily halt imports, PTI reported.

Russia shipped 60 million barrels of crude in October, with Rosneft and Lukoil accounting for 45 million barrels.

India, traditionally dependent on Middle Eastern oil, sharply boosted Russian imports after the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, drawn by steep discounts that pushed Moscow's share in India's crude basket from under 1 per cent to almost 40 per cent. In October, India's Russian crude imports rose 11 per cent month-on-month, with state-run refiners nearly doubling their volumes, while private refiners accounted for over two-thirds of purchases.



In a key development, the Rosneft-owned Vadinar refinery in Gujarat, now sanctioned by the EU and UK, raised its operating level to 90 per cent and imported crude solely from Russia. Its Russian crude intake rose 32 per cent month-on-month, even as the refinery's exports fell 47 per cent from a year earlier to the lowest level since May 2023. CREA noted an 8 per cent decline in October imports by sanctioning countries from Indian and Turkish refineries processing Russian oil, driven largely by drops in the EU (–9 per cent) and UK (–73 per cent). In contrast, Australia increased imports by 140 per cent to Euro 93 million, while US imports rose 17 per cent to Euro 126.6 million, with neither country yet banning products refined from Russian crude. *—PTI*

RELIANCE MOST VALUED

Mcap of 8 firms jumps ₹2.05L cr

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

The combined market capitalisation of eight of the top 10 most valued companies rose by Rs 2,05,185.08 crore last week, driven by strong gains in Bharti Airtel and Reliance Industries.

The broader market staged a sharp rebound, with the BSE Sensex climbing 1,346.5 points, or 1.62 per cent, while the NSE Nifty advanced 417.75 points, or 1.64 per cent, recovering from the recent spell of weakness.

Bharti Airtel emerged as the biggest gainer, with its market valuation rising by Rs 55,652.54 crore to Rs 11,96,700.84 crore. Reliance Industries followed closely, adding Rs 54,941.84 crore to push its mcap to Rs 20,55,379.61 crore.

Tata Consultancy Services saw its valuation jump Rs 40,757.75 crore to Rs 11,23,416.17 crore, while ICICI Bank added Rs 20,834.35 crore, taking its mcap to Rs 9,80,374.43 crore. State Bank of India's valuation increased Rs 10,522.9 crore to Rs 8,92,923.79 crore, and Infosys gained Rs 10,448.32 crore to reach Rs 6,24,198.80 crore.

HDFC Bank added Rs 9,149.13 crore, taking its market cap to Rs 15,20,524.34 crore, while Hindustan Unilever advanced Rs 2,878.25 crore to Rs 5,70,187.06 crore. Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm, followed by HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, Tata Consultancy Services, ICICI Bank, SBI, Bajaj Finance and Infosys. *—PTI*

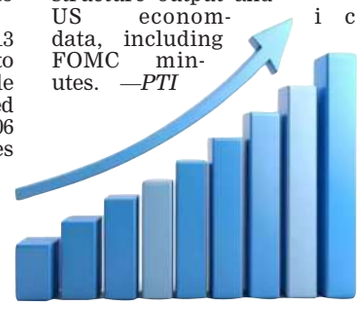
PMI, US-India trade to drive mkts: Analysts

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

Equity markets will take cues this week from India's PMI data, US Federal Reserve meeting minutes, progress on the India-US trade deal and foreign investor activity, analysts said.

Experts noted that strong domestic fundamentals, better-than-expected Q2 earnings, easing inflation and the resolution of the US government shutdown have strengthened sentiment. Sectoral focus is expected on IT, metals and capital-market-linked stocks, aided by stable liquidity and improving earnings visibility.

With the earnings season over, attention will shift to indicators such as Services PMI, forex reserves, infrastructure output and US economic data, including FOMC minutes. *—PTI*



'Rupee bottoms out after 2025 slump'

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

According to a recent report by Jefferies, the Indian rupee may have finally found its footing after a period of sustained weakness. The global financial services firm, in its latest GREED & Fear report, indicated a "growing likelihood that the rupee has bottomed" following months of depreciation.

The rupee has been described as "the worst performer year to date amongst major emerging market currencies," having dropped 3.4 per cent in 2025 to trade near Rs 88.7 per US dollar. Jefferies credits this potential stabilisation to India's resilient macroeconomic indicators, notably a current account deficit at a 20-year low of 0.5 per cent of GDP and foreign exchange reserves amounting to USD 690 billion, sufficient to cover 11 months of imports.

"89 should mark the bottom for the rupee," suggested Jefferies, signalling confidence that the risks of further decline have diminished.

In addition, the report highlighted a year marked by significant foreign outflows from Indian equities, with net foreign selling reaching USD 16.2 billion in 2025. However, domestic investors have counterbalanced this trend, with equity mutual funds alone seeing inflows of Rs 321 billion (USD 3.6 billion) in October and a total of Rs 3.7 trillion (USD 42 billion) in the first ten months of the year. *—ANI*

Byju's row: Riju moves NCLT against CCD deal

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

Riju Ravindran has approached the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) challenging a Compulsory Convertible Debenture (CCD) agreement between Think & Learn Pvt Ltd (TLPL) and a wholly owned subsidiary of Glas Trust Co, Byju's US-based financial creditor, alleging violations of FDI and FEMA regulations.

The CCD arrangement was proposed to raise funds for TLPL to participate in the ongoing rights issue of Aakash Educational Services Ltd (AESL) after Glas failed to secure a stay from the NCLAT and Supreme Court. Glas, which holds 99.25 per cent voting rights in TLPL, is now allegedly attempting to raise funds "illegally" to subscribe to the AESL issue, Riju said in his interim application.

Riju, a suspended TLPL director and promoter, claimed the CCD is structured to appear as FDI but is in substance an external commercial borrowing, which is prohibited. He argued it is simultaneously treated as interim finance under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, something "legally impossible".

TLPL, which owns 25.7 per cent of AESL, received an offer to subscribe to rights shares worth Rs 25.75 crore. In a November 5 CoC meeting, Glas proposed issuing CCDs worth Rs 100 crore through its subsidiary to fund this. While Glas supported the resolution, other creditors refrained, but it was approved due to Glas's majority voting share.

Riju said his representatives raised concerns over legality, valuation and the need for NCLT approval, but the resolution professional proceeded regardless. He termed the CCD terms "invalid and unenforceable", arguing they fail the mandatory conversion test under NDI Rules and RBI norms, amounting to unauthorised ECB. *—PTI*

SC to hear Sahara employees' pleas for pending salaries today

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

The Supreme Court is set to hear interim pleas from employees of the Sahara Group on Monday, regarding their pending salaries. A bench led by Chief Justice BR Gavai will examine the matter.

On 14 October, the apex court requested responses from the Centre, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), and other stakeholders concerning Sahara India Commercial Corporation Ltd. (SICCL)'s application to sell 88 prime properties to Adani Properties Private Limited. This application is scheduled for discussion on 17 November.

During proceedings on Friday, lawyers urged the Chief Justice to prioritise the employees' pleas, emphasising their lack of salary for several months.

The bench previously reviewed SICCL's interlocutory application, addressing the longstanding issue of the Sahara Group's refund obligations. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta requested the inclusion of the Union ministries of Finance and Cooperation as parties, with a deadline for their responses set for 17 November. The court instructed the Sahara Group to review employee claims regarding unpaid salaries and directed the amicus curiae, senior advocate Shekhar Naphade, to gather details about the proposed properties. *—PTI*

Google to invest $40 billion in Texas

HOUSTON, 16 NOV

The plan involves building three new data center campuses to support Google's growing cloud and AI operations *PHOTO: GOOGLE*

Google and Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai has unveiled a USD 40 billion expansion in Texas, the company's largest-ever investment in a single US state. Governor Greg Abbott joined the announcement in Midlothian, highlighting its potential economic and technological impact.

The plan involves building three new data center campuses to support Google's growing cloud and artificial intelligence operations. These energy-intensive facilities will be accompanied by initiatives to strengthen Texas' power grid, improve energy affordability, and provide workforce training for students, apprentices, and skilled workers.

Abbott called it "a Texas-sized investment in the future of our great state," adding that Texas is "the epicenter of AI development, where innovation meets expanding energy." Pichai said the expansion "will create thousands of jobs, offer skills training to college students and electrical apprentices, and accelerate energy affordability initiatives across Texas."

Texas has emerged as a hub for major tech and energy companies, including Tesla, Amazon, and Meta, attracting high-tech manufacturing and cloud infrastructure. Google will also invest in renewable energy and a USD 30 million Energy Impact Fund to support community and school energy programmes, while workforce initiatives will train over 1,700 electrical apprentices, bolstering the state's talent pipeline for AI and data-intensive industries. *—PTI*

India eyes 700–1,600 MW nuke projects

NEW DELHI, 16 NOV

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The state-owned electricity producer NTPC is set to establish nuclear power projects across India, with capacities of 700MW, 1,000MW, and 1,600MW. The company aims to achieve a significant share—30GW—of India's proposed 100GW nuclear capacity by 2047.

A senior official from NTPC revealed, "The capacities of the nuclear projects would be 700MW, 1,000MW, and 1,600MW." Currently, NTPC is assessing land options in several states, including Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh. The projects will only proceed in areas identified and approved by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).

In addition to site evaluations, NTPC is exploring the acquisition of overseas uranium assets and has signed a draft agreement with Uranium Corporation of India Ltd (UCIL) for joint techno-commercial due diligence. The company plans to utilise indigenously developed pressurised heavy-water reactors (PHWRs) for the smaller projects while considering technology collaborations for the larger 1,600MW plants. *—PTI*

INDIA'S LARGEST PRODUCER

Cotton farming dips in Maharashtra amid high costs

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 16 NOV

Data shows that cotton covered 45.45 lakh hectares in 2020-21, producing 101.05 lakh bales *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Maharashtra, the country's largest cotton producer, has witnessed a drop of nearly 4.59 lakh hectares in cotton cultivation over the past four years, as rising labour costs and inadequate mechanisation push farmers towards more economical crops like soybean.

Data from the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and the Cotton Research Centre, Nanded, show that cotton covered 45.45 lakh hectares in 2020-21, producing 101.05 lakh bales. By 2024-25, the area has shrunk to 40.86 lakh hectares, with projected output falling to 87.63 lakh bales.

Dr Arvind Pandagale, agronomist at the Cotton Research Centre, said the shift is driven by cost pressures. "Cotton must be picked by hand, and labour costs have reached Rs 10 per kg while the selling price rarely exceeds Rs 70. Frequent pesticide spraying also adds to manpower and expenses," he said. Mechanisation remains a major challenge. Available cotton-picking machines collect leaves and impurities, prompting industries to work on improved models. Plant height is another hurdle: Indian cotton plants can grow up to seven feet, unlike the 3.5–4 feet plants harvested mechanically in countries like Brazil and Australia. Research is ongoing to reduce plant height, he added.

Farmers echo the concerns. Aba Kolhe from Ghosla village said heavy rain damaged cotton balls this year, pushing labour costs further up. "Except for 2021-22, prices haven't been good. I've cut my cotton area from 11 acres to about half," he said.

With domestic production dipping, India's cotton imports for 2024-25 are expected to rise to 25 lakh bales, while exports are likely to fall from 42.25 lakh bales in 2021-22 to 18 lakh bales, according to the Committee on Cotton Production & Consumption. *—PTI*

US will come around as H1B has cost-advantage: Naidu

VISAKHAPATNAM, 16 NOV

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has said the recent tightening of the H1B visa regime in the United States is only a temporary setback, asserting that Indian tech professionals' cost advantage and advanced skills will ultimately keep them in high demand.

President Donald Trump's overhaul of the H-1B programme, including a USD 1 lakh supplemental fee for new petitions from 21 September, 2025, has raised concerns among Indian engineers, particularly from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, which send the largest number of tech workers to the US. Though Trump cited "abuse" of the system, he has since acknowledged America's need to "bring in talent" for highly specialised roles.

Naidu, credited with shaping Hyderabad into a major IT hub, said restrictions cannot halt Indian professionals' growth. "This is a temporary setback. Some people will suffer, but cost-effective services mean they will depend on us," he told PTI.

He added that opportunities will expand within India as sectors adopt next-generation technologies, including indigenous 4G systems, satellites, drones, AI and quantum computing.

As US visa scrutiny increases, countries such as Canada, Australia, the UK and nations in Europe and West Asia are actively seeking skilled engineers in software, AI, cybersecurity and cloud. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Ajeetesh Sandhu best Indian in Taiwan

TAIPEI, 16 NOV

Ajeetesh Sandhu (71) finished as the best Indian at tied-22nd while S Chikkarangappa (70) ended up tied-24th at the USD 400,000 Taiwan Glass Taifong Open, here on Sunday. Thailand's Ekpharit Wu beat local hero Hung Chien-yao by two shots on the closing stretch to win his first title on the Asian Tour in his rookie season. The 26-year-old Wu shot a five-under-par 67 on the Par-72 course as he benefited from a late stumble by Hung (70), who made back-to-back bogeys on the 15th and 16th holes to open the door for the Thai. Wu finished the tournament with 20-under. India's Khalin Joshi (71) finished tied-42nd while Viraj Madappa (72) was tied-53rd. Pukhraj Singh Gill (72) was tied-56th. The win helped Wu jump from 73rd to 28th in the Asian Tour Order of Merit and also secured him a spot in the USD5 million PIF Saudi International.—*PTI*

Commonwealth Chess: Bijesh wins U-12 Girls title

T'PURAM, 16 NOV

Divi Bijesh, a 10-year-old from here, has won the Under-12 girls title at the Commonwealth Chess Championship 2025 held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 9-16 November. Bijesh, father of Divi, said that she finished with a score of 8.5/9, dominating the field. According to him, even though she is an Under-10 player, Divi chose to compete in the higher age group. The Commonwealth Chess Championship is an international chess event, featuring 13 categories across youth and senior levels, including participation from top-ranked players and Grandmasters from Commonwealth nations. "I am happy that I won. I tried my best in every game. Some rounds were very tough, but I didn't give up. I thank my parents, my coaches, and everyone who supports me," Divi said.—*PTI*

Superior Netherlands whip India 3-0

BENGALURU, 16 NOV

India's campaign in the Billie Jean King Cup playoffs ended in utter disappointment as the Netherlands handed the hosts a crushing 3-0 defeat in their Group G fixture here on Sunday. In the first singles, Shrivalli Bhamidipaty went down to Anouk Kovermans 2-6, 4-6. Sahaja Yamalapalli could not resist the powerful world No. 87 Suzan Lamens as the Dutch cruised to a 6-2, 6-3 win at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium. Later in the doubles, Ankita Raina and Prarthana Thombare were towelled by Lames and Demi Schuurs 6-1, 6-1 in just 69 minutes.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Japan Masters: Naraoka wins for first title in two years

TOKYO, 16 NOV

Japan's Kodai Naraoka won his first badminton title in two years after battling past countryman Kenta Nishimoto 21-11, 10-21, 21-15 in the Kumamoto Masters final on Sunday. Naraoka, the world number 10, claimed his first piece of silverware since the China Open in November 2023 after coming through a tough scrap in western Japan. He took the first game in little time, but world number 13 Nishimoto hit straight back to level the match.—*PTI*

SA seal first Test win on Indian soil after 15 years

It was India's fourth loss at home in the last six Tests

KOLKATA, 16 NOV

Indian batters' frailties against high-quality spin in challenging home conditions were exposed yet again as South Africa outplayed their fancied counterparts by 30 runs in the opening Test here on Sunday for their first success in India after 15 years.

Chasing 124, India never showed the composure or method that Temba Bavuma had demonstrated earlier in the day to be bowled out for 93 in 35 overs.

It was India's fourth loss at home in the last six Tests, including the 0-3 debacle against New Zealand on turning tracks last year. The loss has reignited the debate on Indian batters' ability on turning tracks. In his next over, Jansen went around the wicket and got the big scalp of KL Rahul for 1.

South Africa stretched their overnight 93/7 (lead 63) to 153, courtesy Bavuma's assured effort and Corbin Bosch's brisk 25 off 37 balls in a 44-run eighth-wicket stand that frustrated India for 44 minutes.

Pant's decision not to use Jasprit Bumrah from the more dangerous Club House End, where he got his first-innings fifer, baffled many.He survived an LBW scare on 54 when Siraj's appeal was overturned with the ball missing leg stump.Siraj, however, struck twice in the same over.

India's Ravindra Jadeja walks off after his dismissal PHOTO: PTI

South Africa's Keshav Maharaj, with teammates, celebrates after the team wins during the third day of the first Test PHOTO: PTI

Pitch was not unplayable: Gambhir

India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Sunday mounted a strong defence of the tough Eden Gardens pitch, saying it was precisely the kind of track they were looking for ahead of the first Test against South Africa.India were bowled out for 93 in the chase of 124 to surrender against South Africa by 30 runs here."It was not an unplayable wicket. This (pitch) is exactly what we asked for, and this is what we got. The curator (Sujan Mukherjee) here was very supportive.

I think it's a wicket that can judge your mental toughness, as ones who played with good defence scored runs," said Gambhir in the post-match press conference.

Shubman Gill hospitalised after neck injury

India captain Shubman Gill was on Sunday ruled out of the remainder of the opening Test against South Africa here due to a neck injury. Gill had suffered a neck injury while batting on the second day of the first Test here and was retired hurt on 4 not out. He was taken to the hospital for examination after the end of day's play," the team management said in a statement.

Scoreboard

South Africa 159 and 153 (Bavuma 55*, Bosch 25, Jadeja 4-50, Siraj 2-2, Kuldeep 2-30) beat India 189 and 93 (Washington 31, Axar 26, Harmer 4-21, Jansen 2-15, Maharaj 2-37) by 30 runs.—*PTI*

Right-arm off-spinner Simon Harmer went past Paul Adams' and Imran Tahir's tally of 14 wickets against India in India PHOTO: PTI

Simon becomes highest wicket-taking South African spinner in Tests in India

KOLKATA, 16 NOV

Simon Harmer became South Africa's most successful spinner in Tests in India during the first game of the ongoing two-match series against the host at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Sunday.

Right-arm off-spinner Harmer broke the record jointly held by Paul Adams and Imran Tahir (14 wickets) as he had Dhruv Jurel caught at deep midwicket by Corbin Bosch on the third day.

Playing only his third Test in India, Harmer added three more scalps to his name in the form of Rishabh Pant, Ravindra Jadeja, and Kuldeep Yadav as South Africa successfully defended a target of 124. Harmer also picked up four wickets in the first innings. The 36-year-old played two Tests in India in Mohali and Nagpur in 2015, where he bagged a total of 10 wickets. —*PTI*

INDIA'S LOWEST TOTALS IN 4TH INNINGS

- 81 vs West Indies - Bridgetown, 1997
- 83 vs England - Chennai, 1977
- 93 vs South Africa - Kolkata, 2025
- 100 vs England - Mumbai, 2006
- 103 vs West Indies - Ahmedabad, 1983

FIDE WORLD CUP

Harikrishna goes down in round 5 tiebreak

PANAJI, 16 NOV

India's hopes in the FIDE World Cup 2025 will depend solely on second seed GM Arjun Erigaisi after GM P Harikrishna went down in the fifth round tiebreak against GM Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara here on Sunday.

While Arjun had knocked off two-time champion GM Levon Aronian 1.5:0.5 in the two classical games, Harikrishna had to win the tiebreak against Martinez after drawing both the classical games. The first two Rapid Games, which had 15-minute time control, also ended with a draw. In the next set of Rapid games with 10-minute time control, Harikrishna pushed for a win with white and banked on his preparation to add almost a minute to his clock after 14 moves.

But Martinez was ready with his counter and slowly but surely took control of the situation after the Indian traded the queens, and Martinez won the game in a rook-pawn endgame after 59 moves. Harikrishna faced a must-win situation with black in the second game, but could only manage a draw and was knocked out of the competition in 30 moves.

In the other tiebreaks, GM Shankland defeated former world rapid champion Daniil Dubov in the first tiebreak rapid games. —*PTI*

GROUP B RANJI TROPHY

Smaran's 100, Karun's 95 give K'taka control over Chandigarh

HUBBALLI, 16 NOV

Promising Ravichandran Smaran made an unbeaten hundred and Karun Nair a 95 as Karnataka reached a strong 298 for five against Chandigarh on the opening day of their Elite Group B Ranji Trophy match here on Sunday.

Smaran (110 batting) had Shreyas Gopal (38 batting) for company at stumps at the KSCA Stadium.

This is Smaran's second successive three-figure mark after making an unbeaten 220 against Kerala in the last match at Mangalapuram.

Karnataka were on the back foot initially, having lost skipper Mayank Agarwal, KV Aneesh, and KL Shrijith for just 64 on the board.

As they have done so often this season, Smaran and Karun rescued Karnataka, milking 119 runs for the fourth wicket.

Just as Karun (95, 164b) was motoring towards another hundred, the right-hander was trapped in front of the wicket by left-arm spinner Tanpreet Singh.

Ravichandran Smaran PHOTO: PTI

Left-arm spinner Nishunk Birla (2/85) soon jettisoned Abhinav Manohar as Karnataka slipped to 210, five to face a mini crisis.

But the left-handed Smaran, who brought up his hundred off 165 balls in 219 minutes, found a strong-willed partner in Shreyas.

The pair added 88 runs for the unbroken sixth wicket stand to take Karnataka close to the 300-run mark.

Brief scores: Hubballi, Karnataka: 298/5 in 90 overs (R Smaran 110 batting, Karun Nair 95, Shreyas Gopal 38 batting) vs Chandigarh.

At Mullanpur, Maharashtra: 275/5 in 88 overs (Arshin Kulkarni 133, Prithvi Shaw 74; Gurnoor Brar 2/86, Mayank Markande 2/35) vs Punjab.

At Rajkot: Saurashtra: 317/4 in 90 overs (Prerak Mankad 88 batting, Arpit Vasavada 81, Jay Gohil 68; Vasuki Koushik 1/37) vs Goa. —*PTI*

Dhanush wins air rifle gold, Murtaza silver in Deaflympics

TOKYO, 16 NOV

Dhanush Srikanth smashed the world deaf record in 10m Air Rifle en route to win India's first gold medal in shooting at the 25th Summer Deaflympics, which is underway in Tokyo.

He also broke the Deaflympic qualification record to book his spot in the finals. In the finals, Dhanush shot 252.2 to better his own world record of 251.7 to clinch the gold medal, while his teammate Mohammed Murtaza secured silver with a score of 250.1 The women shooters added a silver and bronze to make it four medals for India in shooting on the first day of competition. In the women's 10m Air Rifle final, Mahit Sandhu won silver with a score of 250.5, 1.9 points behind Ukraine's Violeta Lykova —*PTI*

McIlroy loses out to Fitzpatrick

DUBAI, 16 NOV

Rory McIlroy holed an eagle putt on No. 18 to force a playoff but lost out to Matt Fitzpatrick, who won the World Tour Championship for a third time on a chaotic final day of the 2025 golf season on Sunday.

The consolation for McIlroy was a fourth straight Race to Dubai title to complete a banner year that included winning the Masters to complete the career Grand Slam and an away Ryder Cup with Team Europe.

Fitzpatrick watched it all in the scorer's hut and met McIlroy outside, shaking his hand and hugging his Ryder Cup teammate. —*PTI*

World Boxing Cup: Preeti secures a medal

GREATER NOIDA, 16 NOV

Returning after a year away from international action and a draining battle with Hepatitis A, Preeti Pawar marked her comeback in style, securing a medal for India at the World Boxing Cup Finals here on Sunday.

The 22-year-old defeated fellow Hangzhou Asian Games bronze medallist Nigina Uktamova of Uzbekistan by unanimous decision to move to the semifinals of the women's 54kg category.

A month before the Paris Olympics, Preeti had been diagnosed with Hepatitis A.

"It has been a challenging period for me as I was diagnosed with Hepatitis A a month before the Olympics. But that also motivated me to make a comeback and feel like I have become stronger," Preeti said after her bout.

Despite the illness, she pushed through the Olympics and bowed out only after a tight round-of-16 loss to world championships silver medallist Yeni Arias of Colombia.—*PTI*

Mitchell 119 lifts NZ to a 7-run win over WI in first ODI

CHRISTCHURCH, 16 NOV

Daryl Mitchell's 119 from 118 balls elevated a dawdling match on Sunday as New Zealand beat the West Indies by seven runs in the first one-day international to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Mitchell's seventh ODI century lifted New Zealand to 269-7 as it batted first after losing the toss.

Sherfane Rutherford led the West Indies' reply with his seventh half-century, and an unbroken 53-run partnership between Justin Greaves, who made 38 from 24 balls, and Romario Shepherd, who made 26 from 19, saw the tourists carry their chase into the final over.

The West Indies finally needed nine runs from the last two balls bowled by Jacob Duffy and managed only one, finishing on 262-6.

ective use of the short ball.

The West Indies became bogged down early in its reply. After losing John Campbell (4) in the third over, Alick Athenaze and Keacy Carty consumed almost 18 overs in a partnership of 60 for the second wicket.

Athenaze made 29 from 58 balls and Carty 32 from 67.

New Zealand 269 for 7(Mitchell 119, Conway 49, Seales 3-41, Forde 2-55) beat West Indies 262 for 6 (Rutherford 55, Jamieson 3-52) by seven runs —*PTI*

ONLINE ABUSE

FIFA stepping up anti-discrimination fight

LONDON, 16 NOV

FIFA said on Sunday it had stepped up efforts to tackle online abuse directed at players and officials, reporting a surge in harmful content and referring more offenders to police.

Marking the International Day for Tolerance, FIFA said its Social Media Protection Service (SMPS) had flagged more than 30,000 abusive posts to platforms since the start of the year, part of more than 65,000 escalated since the tool was launched in 2022.

Eleven individuals in Argentina, Brazil, France, Poland, Spain, Britain, and the United States have been reported to law enforcement authorities in 2025 for abuse during FIFA competitions, with one case referred to Interpol.

The relevant national associations were alerted to allow follow-up action at the local level.

FIFA said it was also blacklisting people identified as responsible for "highly abusive behavior," preventing them from purchasing tickets for future FIFA tournaments or events.

The SMPS has been deployed at several competitions this year, including the inaugural 32-team Club World Cup in the United States.

During that tournament, the service monitored 2,401 active accounts across five platforms, analysed 5.9 million posts, flagged 179,517 for review, and reported 20,587 to the platforms.

"Football must be a safe and inclusive space – on the pitch, in the stands and online," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said.

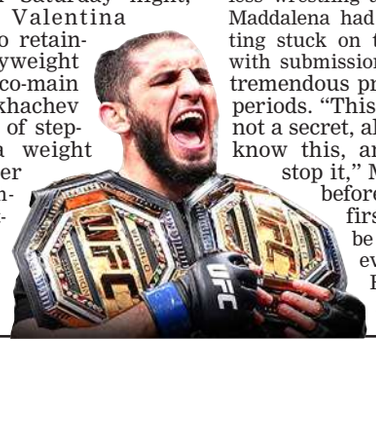
"Our message is clear: abuse has no place in our game, and we will continue to work with our Member Associations, the confederations, and law-enforcement authorities to hold offenders accountable." —*PTI*

Gianni Infantino PHOTO: PTI

Islam Makhachev wins welterweight title

NEW YORK, 16 NOV

Islam Makhachev out-classed Jack Della Maddalena in a five-round beat-down to claim a unanimous decision victory and win the UFC welterweight championship at Madison Square Garden on Saturday night, with Valentina Shevchenko retaining her flyweight title in the co-main event. Makhachev made light of stepping up a weight class after relinquishing the lightweight crown to chase a new challenge, utterly dominating his Australian opponent for 25 minutes with his smothering grappling to claim his 16th UFC victory in a row.



The 34-year-old softened up his 29-year-old adversary with calf kicks before launching a relentless wrestling attack, and Della Maddalena had no answer, getting stuck on the mat, dealing with submission threats under tremendous pressure for long periods. "This is my plan. It's not a secret, all my opponents know this, and nobody can stop it," Makhachev said before calling for his first title defence to be at the proposed event on the White House lawn in 2026. —*PTI*